Parochial Missions To-Day

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PAROCHIAL MISSIONS TO-DAY. A HANDBOOK OF EVANGELISTIC MISSIONS FOR MISSIONERS AND PAROCHIAL CLERGY

By PETER GREEN, M.A.
CANON OF MANCHESTER, AND CHAPLAIN TO H.M. THE KING.

With INTRODUCTION
By the RIGHT REV. PERCY MARK HERBERT, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF BLACKBURN.

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PREFACE

CANON GREEN'S request that I should write a Foreword to this book gives me an opportunity which I should otherwise not so easily find of proclaiming my belief in the value of parochial missions. No one questions their value in the past, and Canon Green does the Church a service by insisting on their value in the present and for the future. The outstanding feature in religious life to-day is certainly the widespread interest in, and real hunger for, spiritual reality: in town and country, in mill and office, among educated and uneducated, old and young, I believe this to be true. Into its causes there is no need for me to enter, but it is surely essential that we should recognize the fact. And another outstanding feature is the comparative powerlessness of institutional religion. Every earnest parish priest in his dealings with his people knows how hard it is to bridge the gulf between interested questioning and practical experience, between critical enquiry and personal surrender. Conferences, Campaigns, Conventions, and a score of other methods have been tried, with greater or less success. But it is time that we explored again the method of parochial missions, and set our hand to train the men to lead them.

Canon Green in these pages gives us his usual wealth of sound advice and warnings: details as well as principles will be found fully discussed. I have no wish, nor indeed the capacity, to treat his argument at length. I would only call attention, and this with real gratitude, to the pages that follow, believing that clergy and laity alike will gain much by considering with his help all the possibilities that lie hidden in this method of changing habit into conviction and conviction into service in the cause of Christ and His Kingdom.

PERCY BLACKBURN.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, BLACKBURN,
September 18th, 1928.

INTRODUCTION

THE form and arrangement of this book is rather awkward because it is, unavoidably I think, addressed to two different classes of people. The first five chapters are addressed to parochial clergy who are considering whether, or not, to have an Evangelistic Mission in their parishes. The last two chapters are addressed to young clergymen who are debating with themselves the important question whether they are, or are not, called of God to conduct such missions. No doubt it would have been more logical to have treated these two distinct questions in two different volumes. But there were obvious practical difficulties. And on the other hand there are some very real advantages in treating both aspects of Missions, those namely that concern the missioner, and those that concern the parish to be missioned, together. For the missioner will often have to guide and direct the preparation in the parish, and will in any case have the deciding word in all that is done. And on the other hand the parochial clergy will be none the worse for knowing, in broad outline, what to expect from a Mission. For if a parish priest has had no experience of a Mission, either as one of the congregation or as an assistant, he may have but the vaguest idea of its nature and object, which will make it the more difficult for him to decide whether to have one or not. So, while this book addresses two classes of readers, I hope it may not fall between two stools, but may, by God's blessing, be of some use to both. For I am sure the need for intensive preaching of Christ's gospel to the multitude is as necessary as ever it was, and will prove as fruitful as it has always proved.

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Revive Thy work, O Lord,
Disturb this sleep of death;
Quicken the smouldering embers now
By Thine Almighty Breath.

There shall be showers of blessing.
Ezekiel xxxiv. 26.

CHAPTER I

IS THE DAY OF THE PAROCHIAL MISSION OVER?

No one, I am sure, who has the interests of religion really at heart, and who has given the matter any careful thought, will be able to deny that the most important thing in the Church is the life of the parishes. If the life there is strong and vigorous, if congregations are large, active, zealous and united, and the workers keen and filled with the Spirit, there is at any rate a chance that everything else connected with the whole Church of England will flourish. But if the parishes are dead, if congregations are small, apathetic, and divided, and the workers few and unspiritual, all the work of the whole Church, at home and abroad, must necessarily suffer. When the World Call to the Church was first published a clergyman wrote to one of the ecclesiastical papers to say that parsons working at home should be glad to respond to the call, and to volunteer for foreign service, "since no one wants us or our message at home." If what he said were a fact, which, of course, I do not for a moment admit, it would not support his argument. It would simply prove that the World Call was in vain. For a country where the bulk of the people had no use for the Gospel would be a country incapable of doing anything to convert a world. And as with work abroad, so too with that at home. All the Church's work rests ultimately on the parishes. Hence the enormous importance of parish work. But I need not labour that point, for I have

treated it elsewhere. What I want to say here and now is simply this. If the life of the parish is a matter of such vital moment, it is important to know whether we have, in Parochial Missions, a powerful weapon of which, perhaps, we are failing to make full use; or whether, on the other hand, missions of the type so much used in the 'seventies and 'eighties of the last century have had their day, and do not, in our time, yield fruits which justify the time and effort which such missions demand.

Now it cannot be denied that many people do hold, very firmly, the opinion that the Evangelistic Parochial Mission has had its day, and has outlived its usefulness. On the other hand, I should obviously not have troubled to write a book about Parochial Missions unless I believed in them. I shall therefore devote this opening chapter to a defence of such missions. And the best way to defend Parochial Missions will be to examine both the arguments which are brought, wrongly as I hold, against them; and also the causes for their failure in certain cases. For that Missions do, sometimes, fail completely cannot be, and need not be, denied.

(i) The usual reason given for the belief that Parochial Missions have had their day is that we no longer have missioners able to preach them. Where to-day, people ask, is there a Body, a Hay-Aitken? And they challenge us to name the men on whom the mantle of these masters has fallen. Now even if I admitted that we have no inspired missioners to-day, which I do not, I should find it easier to believe that it was due to our lack of faith in the power and value of evangelistic preaching, than to suppose that half a century had so changed human nature that what once moved men's hearts and wills was now of no avail. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save"[1]; Christ, if He is simply and sincerely preached,

[1] Isaiah lix. 1.

can still "draw all men"[1]; the Holy Spirit has the same power to-day as in the days of our grandparents, to move to repentance, to convert, to renew, to sanctify. No doubt if the clergy and mission workers themselves have little real faith in the value of a mission the missioners will find themselves hampered, as their Master was, and will be unable to do "many mighty works, because of their unbelief."[2] But the idea that Missions are no longer of value because we lack the men able to preach them is utterly false, because it is based on the assumption that the success of a Mission depends on the wisdom, eloquence, knowledge or other personal endowment of the Missioner. And this everyone who has had any wide experience of missions will be forward to deny. We shall discuss later the qualifications needed in a missioner, and the methods of his training. But of this we may be sure: If any man earnestly desires to be used of God in this way, and to save souls, the power will not be denied him. Here, as in everything else, some men will show outstanding ability, and seem to achieve great things; and other men's abilities will be more pedestrian, and their visible success less. But we do well to remember that God's verdict may very well reverse ours. And even here and now the best results are by no means gained by the most brilliant men, or the most popular preachers. Perhaps, if we wish to see Parochial Missions widely successful again, the first thing we have to learn is to think less of the Missioner and more of his message; less of the man and more of the Holy Spirit. It is worth remembering that men said of the greatest of missioners that "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible."[3] I have had experience of about forty missions, as Missioner, Assistant Missioner, Rector of the missioned parish, or member of the

[1] John xii. 32. [2] Matt. xiii. 58. [3] 2 Cor. x. 10.

congregation, and the eloquence, learning or popularity of the missioner appears to me very definitely the last and least thing in the success or failure of a Mission. While we have men of prayer, sincerely anxious to win souls for Christ, we shall not have to lament the lack of effective missioners. I do not for a moment deny that the right way to conduct a Mission is a thing that has to be learned. I would not deny, I would indeed strongly assert, that any powers of learning, eloquence, or personal charm with which a man may have been gifted, can be effectively consecrated to this work. I believe, and shall say frequently in this book, that every missioner must follow his own line, and work out his own methods, and will probably make mistakes while he is learning what methods suit him best, and how most powerfully to deliver his message. The same things, of course, can be said of every type of work for God. But that the gifts needed for a Missioner are no longer given to men by God the Holy Ghost is an idea which seems to me equally absurd and profane. Rather I would urge every young clergyman who has been four or five years in orders, and is beginning to gain control over his stores of matter, and his power of expression, to think carefully and prayerfully about the question and to ask himself whether he is not called to this work. Are we not all bidden to stir up the gift that is in us by the laying on of hands? Is not the duty of doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of our ministry, laid upon every one of us?

(ii) Now there are many people who would, I know, agree with most of the last paragraph who would nevertheless declare that the day of the old-fashioned parochial mission is over. We do not deny, they would say, that God still uses His ministers to win souls for Himself; we must assert that changed conditions call for a change of methods. A short time ago I met with a very full and explicit statement

of this point of view. The argument ran as follows: Fifty or sixty years ago universal and compulsory education had not had time to produce its effects. The working classes, alike in our big towns and in remote country districts, were very savage and uncouth. No doubt when they were good they were capable of true saintliness. But when they were bad their sins were of a gross type; drunkenness, foul language, brutal vice, and open godlessness were their faults. For such people a strong, emotional appeal was needed. As far as they believed anything they believed Christianity. They needed a strong appeal to the emotions and will to induce them to accept Christ. Intellectual doubt, except in a few cases, among the more thoughtful of the operatives, was not the difficulty. To-day all that has changed. The manners and morals of the great mass of the workers are certainly no worse, and quite possibly better, than those of the middle and upper classes. But in every class alike intellectual doubts keep men back from serving God. Is the Bible true? Did such a person as Jesus ever live, and if so was He divine? Has modern science proved religion to be a delusion? Has modern psychology provided better ways of dealing with what theologians used to call sin than the Church ever knew? Are all religions no more than interested, or at the best unconscious, apologies for existing social conditions? Have not the Churches always been the slavish supporters of the powers that be, and against the workers? These, we are told, are the questions which keep men away from church, and from religion, to-day. To-day therefore the Church must address herself to the mind, not to the heart or will. Reasoned answers to a man's difficulties, not emotional appeals to his conscience, are what are needed nowadays. The day of the Evangelistic Mission has given place to the day of the Teaching Mission.

Now it may be frankly admitted that there is a large measure of truth in all this. But as a half-truth is always the most dangerous of lies, it will be well to insist that it is certainly not more than half true. There has been a tremendous alteration, during the last half-century, in the manners and behaviour of the poorer classes. I believe elderly gentlemen, of the retired colonel and country squire type, may still be found, in the southern shires, who talk nonsense at their dinner tables about "Board school manners" and are even prepared to say that "free education has spoiled the working classes." The best corrective would be to ask them to read *The Life of Father Lowder* or any other biography describing religious or social work among the poorest classes in London, or any of our great cities, sixty or seventy years ago. But it would not be necessary to go back as far as that. I saw something of this type of work in Bethnal Green, Walworth, and Poplar, from 1890 onward. I can only say I thank God for "Board school manners." But while admitting, and even insisting, that there has been a tremendous improvement in manners, and perhaps in morals, during the last half-century, I shall strongly deny that that fact renders the evangelistic appeal superfluous. The fact that a man does not get drunk, stands obediently in a queue when directed to do so by a policeman, and is too well-mannered to spit or use obscene language in a tram, certainly shows that he is a better citizen than a man who fails in any or all of these respects; it does not necessarily mean that he is a better Christian. For it may be due to the fact that he has been educated and civilized, and not at all to the fact that he has accepted Christ as his Lord and Master. But the aim of a Parochial Mission is just exactly that, and nothing else, namely, to induce men and women to make the great decision, and to accept Jesus as Saviour, Master and Lord. The message of every Mission

should be, " Choose ye this day whom ye will serve " ; the answer it should seek is the reply, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

If anyone asserts that to win the modern man the Teaching Mission will be more effective than the Evangelistic Mission, I shall simply dismiss the argument as bad psychology. It is bad psychology because a Teaching Mission is addressed to the intellect, and what is, or should be, aimed at is an act of will. It is bad psychology, also, because till the affections have been aroused, and the will moved, it is impossible to reach the intellect. " You can't teach anyone anything in which he is not interested " is a sound maxim of psychology. I have had any number of people suffering from intellectual difficulties, sent to me from time to time. In quite a large proportion I have recognized, and in a fair proportion the men and women have frankly acknowledged, that the root difficulty was that they were not really interested. Many years ago a famous missioner sent me a young man of about twenty-one to be prepared for baptism. At our second interview I said to him, " There is something here I don't understand. Why did you speak to Fr. Blank ? You are not really interested in religon." He replied quite frankly, " I'm not. I wanted to find out how such a clever man could believe the stories of the Old Testament. So I asked him some questions. He thought I wanted to be baptized." I said : " Come and see me as often as you like, and we will talk about books and music, or play chess. But I shall not talk to you about religion, because you are not really interested." That was many years ago. I believe the man, who is still my friend, has gained a true religion. But at the time he was not in a state to be taught anything.

Teaching Missions have their value for those who have already accepted Christ, and we shall hope to show later their proper relation to Evangelistic

Missions. If we recognize "tongues," in the New Testament sense of that word, as a manifestation of the converting power of the Holy Spirit,[1] and understand by the word "prophesying" the regular and systematic exposition and explanation of the faith, may we not claim that St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiv., draws very much the same distinction as that upon which I am insisting? "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that believe." A man who has wholeheartedly accepted Christ as Master and Saviour may still be troubled with intellectual doubts on many points of doctrine, but he is in a position to face those doubts. A man still unconverted is, in most cases, not in that position at all. He lacks "the will to believe."

(iii) We now pass from the consideration of the reasons often brought forward to prove that purely Evangelistic Missions are out of date, and have had their day, to the consideration of some of the causes of the failure of many parochial missions to-day. And the last paragraph immediately suggests one reason. I am convinced that many parochial missions fail because the Missioner does not recognize the need for conversion—for an act of decision, that is to say—on the part of the individual Christian, and so does not aim at it or work for it. The evangelical note is, I fear, sadly lacking in much of our ordinary preaching. This, no doubt, is a reaction from the days when conversion was preached not merely as the necessary beginning of the religious life, but as the sum total of it. Appeals for conversion, for acceptance of a free salvation, and for open profession that the hearer was "saved" were repeated in every sermon till preacher and people alike grew weary of

[1] I do not, of course, mean to imply that they are necessary, or even desirable, manifestations of conversion.

them. I came across, some years ago, a striking example of this kind of thing. A volume of sermons, by an evangelical divine of the middle of the last century, had at the end a sermon preached at his funeral by a brother minister, which contained the following exquisitely ridiculous sentence:

> Though it were impious to doubt that our revered departed friend is now upon his seat in glory, and impossible to suppose that he is uneasy upon it, yet even there his bliss would doubtlessly be increased if some friend were converted at his funeral. Who will come forward to grant him this happiness? Who will be the victim to grace his obsequies?

This sort of thing would discredit any doctrine. Yet I wish that the direct evangelical note, the appeal for acceptance of Christ, for self-dedication and consecration, were more often and more clearly sounded in our ordinary preaching. But the lack of it, which is regrettable in ordinary preaching to congregations of more or less regular church-goers, becomes absolutely fatal in mission preaching. How can we expect to attain that at which we do not consciously aim? How can we expect conversions if we do not urge people to be converted?

Yet that this note is all too often absent from mission preaching cannot, I fear, be denied. I once attended a Mission at which the Senior Missioner delivered ten addresses on ten successive nights which were interesting, spiritual, eloquent and learned. But if anyone had heard them delivered on ten successive mornings or evenings in any cathedral or parish church in England he would never have remarked anything about them, except that he might have thought them rather above the usual level in ability. Of anything like an appeal for decision, or any evangelical note, there was no trace. And though this was, I admit, an extreme case it was not, I greatly

fear, by any means unique. If, at the end of a Mission, the Missioner has to lament that no one seems to have been drawn in, he might well ask himself whether his steady and conscious aim during the Mission was, in the old-fashioned but surely profoundly significant phrases, to "bring sinners under conviction" and to lead them to "accept a free salvation."

(iv) Another cause of the failure of a Mission is closely allied to the one we have just considered. As the Missioner can easily fail to realize his true duty, so too the congregation can, and very frequently do, fail to realize theirs. A Mission is not something done by the Missioner for the benefit of the congregation. It is, or should be, something attempted by the congregation and clergy of the parish, under the guidance of the Missioner, for the benefit of the parish *for which the congregation and clergy are jointly responsible to God.* I wish every congregation of regular and respectable church-goers would recognize their deep moral responsibility for the souls of the people living in the parish of the church at which they worship. The portion of the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel, commonly read at the induction of a new vicar, is not addressed to the vicar only. If St. Paul were alive to-day and were an Archdeacon (and a very troublesome, valuable, and exacting archdeacon he would be) it is to the congregation and clergy, not to the clergy alone, that he would say, "Ye are the body of Christ." If Christ is to work in any parish it is through all His members, lay as well as clerical, that He must work. If He is to know His sheep and be known of them, it is in and through His members that He must so know and be known. If He is to go after His lost one *till He find it*, they must be His feet and hands and voice. Yet many regular church people quite fail to understand this. Some feel no responsibility for others. They would be

quite astonished to be told that a church might be full to the doors every Sunday, and still be a failure in the eyes of God if the people living in its parish remained unevangelized. They lack the missionary heart for their own flesh and blood as so many lack it for the heathen abroad. And even good church workers are in danger, when it comes to a Mission, of thinking first of themselves. I have known mission visitors excuse themselves from visiting during the actual progress of a Mission on the plea that they "did not wish to miss one word of the Missioner's message." On the other hand, I have known workers who were hardly ever seen at the actual services; they were out looking up people who had failed to turn up, getting fresh promises for the following night, or shepherding the hesitating as far as the church door and then going back again for more. Quite clearly the visitors in the first case misunderstood the object of a Mission, and the nature of their own work in connection with it. Often, when I enquire of a clergyman how the Mission recently held in his parish has gone, I get the reply, "Well, I don't know that any new members were drawn in, but our own people have been very much refreshed." On such occasions I always want to reply, "Then the Mission has been a double failure. New members ought to have been drawn in; and your own people ought not to have been refreshed, they should have been exhausted."

(v) I have spoken in the last paragraph of the way in which a Mission may suffer owing to the regular members of the congregation misunderstanding the nature of a Mission, and the sort of part they themselves ought to play. But it is not always a case of misunderstanding. Sometimes there is definite hostility. Some years before the War a parish priest, now dead, wrote to a friend:

> I very much regret that I allowed myself to be over-persuaded by a few friends, and to have a parochial mission. The man you recommended was an excellent fellow, and I am sure he did his best. But there was a feeling of hostility to the Mission from the very first. Many of our best people stayed away from church during the whole period, and quite a number of those who absented themselves then have never come back, or at least never settled down. I fear it will be a good many years before the harm which the Mission has done can be undone again.

No doubt this is rather an extreme case. But it is certainly not unique. At one Mission in South Africa my first duty was to call on a leading member of the church to try and reconcile him to the idea of a Mission. He was a wealthy man, a generous supporter of the church, and himself a regular worshipper. I found him a kind, courteous and friendly man, and I judged him to be a sincere Christian. But he was immovably opposed to the idea of a Mission. His three reasons were as follows:

(*a*) He objected to the interference with the regular Sunday services. He said that when he went to church he knew, apart from the sermon, exactly what to expect. The Prayer Book was his protection against the private fads and eccentricities of any particular minister. If non-liturgical services were to be held in church he might as well, he declared, be a nonconformist at once.

(*b*) He objected to the emotional appeal. Such appeals, he said, moved young, foolish and unstable people for a time. But in the long run they did, he was sure, more harm than good.

(*c*) He disbelieved in the need for such special efforts. The parish, though rather scattered, was not, he said, very large, and it ought to be possible to reach everyone by the ordinary methods of pastoral visitation and instruction.

Again, the objection may be something more than an objection to Mission methods. There may be a real, even though scarcely conscious, objection to new members joining the church. Some years ago I commended a young newly-married couple to the Vicar of the parish in which they were going to settle. A year later I found they were regular members of another church some distance from their home. When I asked the man why they had left the church of their own parish he said, "Well, you see, they don't really want new members there. The congregation is not big, and it's just one clique (he pronounced it 'click') and outsiders are made to feel that they are not wanted." I asked the Rural Dean whether this could be a true account. He replied, "Oh dear, yes. A very accurate description. I don't suppose they have added a new member to the congregation in the last ten years. Even the young people leave as they grow up. The church is dying slowly and neither the Vicar nor the workers seem to recognize it." Now in a parish where any large number of church people resent Mission methods, and even more in a parish where new members are not desired, a Mission is, of course, perfectly useless. We shall have to discuss, later, what methods a clergyman, confronted with such a parish, ought to adopt so as to stir up a missionary feeling among the regular congregation. But clearly to hold a Mission before such a spirit has been aroused is to court disaster.

(vi) Again, Missions fail because they are held in parishes which, for one reason or another, are not in the right condition for one. I believe many Missions have been held when, if a really experienced missioner had been called in, and had known all the circumstances, he would have said: "The parish is not ready for a Mission. Do not think of having one." If I may mention one person by name (*honoris causa*), I would say that I never admired

Bishop Knox more, during all the years of his episcopate in Manchester, than when, at the time of a General Mission in a certain town, he refused to permit a Mission in one parish on the declared ground that no good could come of it.

Then of course there are many special causes of failure. The preparation may have been too short, or in other ways defective The Mission may have been (I had almost said " will probably have been ") too short, so that it came to an end just at the point when fruit might have been expected. The organizations —Bible classes, guilds, missionary societies and clubs—into which the newly caught members should have been drafted may have been lacking, or moribund. The zeal of workers may have exhausted itself in the preparation and work of the Mission, so that the after-care of those drawn in, on which so much depends, was lacking. Any of these things may cause the failure of a Mission which might have done great things for the advancement of God's kingdom.

(vii) Rather unwillingly I must touch on one more cause of the failure of Missions. I mean the introduction, during or immediately after the Mission, of changes in ceremonial or teaching. I have nothing to say against such changes. On the contrary, I believe that there are many parishes where fuller Catholic teaching, and stricter attention to the minimum, at least, of decent ceremonial, would do much good. I am convinced that changes, no matter in what direction, should not be made hastily, arbitrarily, or without the full consent of the people. And I hold that the existence, in every parish, of a Church Council, with full legal status, gives us clergy an opportunity to make necessary changes with our people's full knowledge and consent. But for all that I do certainly desire an advance in such matters. Much that passes for " sober English churchmanship,"

the "*via media*," and "hearty homely services without extremes," seems to me nothing but a survival of Georgian and Early Victorian slovenliness and neglect. I do not mean that the clergy and laity of such churches are slovenly or neglectful. I mean that their standards of teaching, practice, and ceremonial do not conform to the Prayer Book but stereotype the methods of the deadest time of our national religious life. But any changes which have to be made, in no matter what direction, should be made before, not during or immediately after, a Mission. If they are made before the Mission is even spoken of, any excitement or opposition will have time to die down, and those who are drawn in by the Mission will simply accept the church as they find it. But if they are introduced during or after the Mission they will, at the best, tend to draw off the people's attention from more vital matters, while at the worst they may easily generate such heat and bitterness as will undo all the good done. I had an example of this in a Mission in which, a good many years ago, I myself took a small and inconspicuous part. The Mission seemed to be a great success, and it was suggested that the Church Council should meet on the evening after the Mission closed, so that the Chief Missioner might receive in person the thanks of the members of the Council, and might discuss with them how best to follow up and develop the work. The Vicar first called on the two members of the Council most likely to oppose any advance in ceremonial to propose a vote of thanks to the Chief Missioner. They did so with a good deal of feeling and, I believe, entire sincerity. Several other members of the Council spoke, and the vote of thanks was passed with acclamation. The Vicar then said that it would be nice to have some permanent memorial of the Mission, and at the same time to prove to the Chief Missioner that his teaching had been welcomed and

had borne fruit. Nothing could combine these two things better than that the Council should recommend the introduction of the eucharistic vestments. The Missioner immediately rose and said that he was deeply touched by the kind things that had been said about him, and by this proof that his teaching had indeed been accepted. If the vestments were used for the first time the following Sunday, which was to be observed as Thanksgiving Sunday for the blessings of the Mission, they would be associated in people's minds with the Mission and for all time would recall, to the memory of people who saw them, the thought of resolutions made at the Mission. No one liked to oppose the Missioner, or to seem ungrateful for what he had done. Least of all could the two men who had proposed the vote of thanks in such warm terms now seem to go back on what they had said. So the motion to introduce vestments was passed unanimously, or at least *nem. con.* But at the next meeting of the Council there was a fearful row. The members felt that they had been tricked. Many felt that the Mission, which had meant so much to them, and which they regarded as a real movement of God the Holy Ghost, had been degraded. Even those people who would have welcomed the change felt, and surely felt rightly, that there was a lack of straightforwardness about the way it had been brought about. Over eighty regular members left the church, and among those who remained there was a feeling of suspicion and resentment which was still active five years later. I have described an extreme case. But I fear that something of the same thing is not uncommon. A clergyman naturally wishes to use the enthusiasm and good-will generated by a Mission to secure something which he feels to be right in itself, and good for the people, and for which, perhaps, he has been waiting for years. But I am sure such use of a Mission is never justified. As I

have said, I am by no means opposed to advances in teaching and ceremonial. But such advance should not be attempted in connection with a Parochial Mission. A Mission aims at conversion. Its objective is great enough and important enough by itself. Its success ought not to be imperilled by associating it with other things.

I have mentioned so many things which hinder the success of a Mission, and described so many ways in which a Mission may fail, that some readers of this book may feel discouraged, and may hesitate as to whether to have one at all. I confess that I shall not be sorry if what I have written has this effect. Much better not have a Mission at all than one under such conditions that it is foredoomed to failure. In a Mission we ask God to grant a special outpouring of His Holy Spirit, an outpouring on the congregation for edification and sanctification, and an outpouring on those that are outside for conversion. Such a special call upon God is a very serious thing. It ought not to be made lightly. It ought not to be made at all unless we believe that the time for it is ripe, nor unless we are willing to do all that is humanly possible to make the results worthy of God's gracious gifts. But if the time is well chosen, and if we strive to do our part, God will not fail us. Ths Mission will be blessed.

CHAPTER II

WHEN TO HAVE, AND WHEN NOT TO HAVE, A MISSION

After what has been said in the last chapter, the first thing to do is to consider when a Mission should, and when it should not, be attempted. And as the latter point is more easily settled than the early one we will consider first when not to hold a Mission.

I am sure that no clergyman should have a Mission in his parish till he himself has been there for some years, and knows his workers, and the special needs of the parish, well. When I came to my present parish, some fifteen years ago, a General Mission had been planned for the whole town, and both the parish I had just left and my new parish were looking forward to taking part. My successor in the parish I had left had the courage and good sense to declare that he could not face a Mission till he knew his ground better. So he postponed the Mission. But I had been one of those who had originated the plan for a General Mission, so I did not like to withdraw. No one could have had two better missioners. But on the whole I believe the Mission did more harm than good. The ideal time for a Mission is when the Vicar has round him a loyal band of old and tried workers, whom he has learned to know and trust, and who know and trust him, and a fine band of young and keen helpers whom he prepared for their confirmation, and who have grown up under his eye. I do not want to lay down any hard and fast rule. But generally speaking I should say that a clergyman ought

to have been in a parish for five years before he has a Mission. Of course, in some parishes the workers may be at once well organized and quick to make friends. And the parson may be a man able to get into effective touch with others in a short time. But obviously these conditions are exceptional. At any rate let the clergyman feel that he knows, and can rely on, his workers, and understands the needs of his parish.

Again, from what was written in Chapter I, it should be obvious that no Mission should be attempted if the church and parish are in an unsatisfactory condition. Yet with quite surprising frequency I get letters in which the writer says: "I came to this parish a short time ago. Owing to the long illness of the late incumbent (or his great age, or some other cause) the whole place is utterly dead. Would you advise me to have a Mission?" I always feel inclined to reply, "If it were the churchwarden, instead of the church, which had died, would you propose to revive him by having a course of sermons at his funeral?" Yet, and it is a thing which cannot be said too often or too plainly, preaching a Mission in a "dead" parish is nothing else but preaching to a corpse. The function of a Mission is to supplement, not to take the place of, plain, straightforward, day-in-day-out pastoral work. If a clergyman finds a parish dead, and his church empty, he must set-to and gather a congregation by the ordinary methods of visiting, Sunday School work, the after-care of confirmation candidates, and attention to communicants. Seven years of steady pastoral work may not be too long a period in which to build up such a body of workers as shall justify aggressive evangelistic work. Such aggressive evangelistic work is, I am sure, the duty of every Christian congregation, and the lack of the spirit which would produce and inspire it is a grievous weakness in many

respectable churches. Such congregations are indeed "settled on their lees: they say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil."[1] But when all that is said it is still true that there must be a congregation, and it must be alive and missionary hearted, before a Mission can stand a chance of success.

Suppose, however, that the condition of the church and parish is unsatisfactory not because there is no congregation, or a very small one, but because it is divided and full of rival cliques and parties. This is by no means an unusual state of things. I will describe a parish I once knew well. It had been for years under the charge of an old-fashioned Evangelical. A new vicar came who made many changes, but while he offended many of the older people he undoubtedly rallied to the church many new members and secured the affections of the young people. But he stayed only a few years. The next vicar found two bitterly opposed parties. The mere fact that one party desired a thing seemed a sufficient reason for the other party to oppose it. After little more than two years in the parish, the vicar broached the question of having a Parochial Mission. In his fourth year it was held, and was wonderfully blessed. Amongst many good effects of the Mission the most notable was the complete disappearance of mutual bitterness and hostility. Working together for an object in which all could unite, and concentrating on vital issues instead of upon unessential trifles, the workers came to know and understand one another.

Nor, provided there is a congregation of anything like a reasonable size, and a band of workers anything like adequate, should the lack of evangelistic enthusiasm in the church be accepted as a final argument against holding a Mission. What I mean is that the lack, in a congregation, of the spirit of St. Andrew—the spirit that drives a person who has found Christ to

[1] Zeph. i. 12.

go and call a brother to the like experience—may be a good reason for not having a Mission at once. It is no reason for not looking forward to the time when it may be possible to have one. If the spirit is lacking it must be aroused and developed. How can this best be accomplished? Something may of course be done by preaching and teaching, especially if some definite tasks can be suggested to the congregation. But if preaching and teaching alone will call out the desired response it is clear that the spirit of evangelism was not really lacking in the congregation. It was merely latent, waiting to be aroused. But I am thinking of congregations where it really seems to be quite lacking. The people regard religion from an altogether self-regarding point of view. The spirit of service is lacking. They want to come to church; to get their spiritual needs supplied, and to go home again. They do not want to be bothered. Indeed, not very long ago a lady said to me, "I've left St. ——'s. I got tired of the continual appeals. Oh! I don't mean for money. The Vicar admits we were all good givers. But he was always on to us to be doing this and doing that. Perfect socialism I call it. No, I want my religion to be a comfort to me. I've troubles enough of my own. When I come back from church I want to feel rested, and refreshed, and happier than when I went. I don't want simply to be made more wretched." Where this kind of spirit is common preaching will effect little. Indeed, it may do more harm than good, especially if any querulous note, any note of blaming and of nagging, be allowed to creep in. In such cases the people will be hardened in their opposition.

What, then, will effect the desired reformation? I fear my answer will seem to some readers a merely conventional one. They will say of it, when they hear it, "Oh, of course. He feels bound to say that." But I am going to suggest a certain cure, not because

to suggest it is the proper thing to do, but because I have tried it myself, and am convinced of its value. The best way to arouse the evangelistic spirit in a congregation is to concentrate for a time on foreign missions. Opponents of foreign missions often say, "Why not teach the heathen at home, and do something for the ragged children in the slums of our big cities, instead of being so keen on people the other side of the world? It will be time enough to think of the heathen abroad when you have converted the heathen at your own doors." My answer, and the answer I suppose of all who know the facts, is that it is just those who are keenest on foreign missions who do most social and evangelistic work at home, while congregations who neglect foreign missions are seldom active in home mission work in their own parish. I have heard Dr. Lang, Archbishop of York, tell how, when he was offered the heavy parish of Portsea, he sought the advice of a friend. His friend told him to find out what the parish did for foreign missions, and to accept or decline according as he found the parish doing much or little for foreign missions. He applied the test; found that the church was a keen missionary one; accepted the living; and declares he never regretted it. I am sure that this story bears witness to an almost universal truth. The missionary spirit is one and indivisible; if it stirs people to evangelistic efforts at home they will be keen also about reaching the heathen in foreign lands, and if it inflames people with zeal for those abroad they will not neglect the heathen at home.

So if a congregation seems cold and dead, try a dose of foreign missions. I have tried that prescription myself and know that it works. Thanks to the pioneer work of the late Dr. Edward Lee Hicks, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who was Rector here for fifteen years, my present parish has never lacked workers. But the two years after the Armistice were everywhere

years of great difficulty for the Church. Everybody seemed tired, disheartened, disinclined to make any effort, lacking in interest. And the young people were curiously frivolous, undisciplined and difficult to influence. Most of this was, I believe, a passing phenomenon due to the enormous strain of the War. But the witness of many of my clerical brethren convinces me that it was both real and widespread. Then in 1922 Canon D. S. Johnson asked me to arrange for a special Missionary Mission in as many as possible of the parishes of Salford. I did not want to do so. I was very much over-worked. I did not think the time suitable. I doubted if many of the parishes would respond. But where foreign missions are concerned Canon Johnson has never learned to take "no" for an answer. So I gave way. And as I was Rural Dean I could not ask other clergy to have Missions and not have one myself. So one was held in the rural deanery in 1923. I can only say that nothing that I have ever known, in the whole course of my ministry, has ever done so much to quicken and revive a parish, or done it so quickly and with such lasting results. It set young people praying; it made young men willing and eager to speak and pray publicly; it deepened personal religion; it aroused a sense of corporate responsibility. It did not, of course, draw in people from without. It was not meant to do so. It was addressed to the faithful and its results had to be looked for in the faithful. But among the regular congregation the results were many, remarkable, and lasting. And I know that the results were similar in many other parishes. So if a congregation seems to lack the spirit of service, and to be deficient in evangelical fervour, I can suggest nothing better than a Missionary Mission. There is no need for me to describe such a Mission. Full information can be obtained from the diocesan secretary of either the S.P.G. or the

C.M.S. And a suitable man to conduct the Mission can usually be supplied or suggested. Strictly speaking, such an effort is not really a Mission at all, in the sense in which that word is used in this book. It is rather a campaign of instruction and recruiting, conducted in connection with all classes and organizations of the church and parish. I do not doubt that anything else that succeeded in arousing enthusiasm for foreign missions, such as a Missionary Exhibition, a Missionary School, or even a Missionary Quiet Day or Missionary Bazaar would have something of the same kind of effect. Of course, if you have a Missionary Mission this year you will have to postpone your Parochial Mission two, or possibly even, three years. It is a mistake to over-burden a parish with special efforts. But it is better to postpone your great effort for a year or two rather than to rush into it without adequate equipment.

I have said so much about what is needed to make a Mission a success that some people may be tempted to think that the only parishes in which a Mission is likely to do any good are just those in which no Mission is needed. "What!" they will be tempted to say. "Must a church, before a Mission is attempted, have a clergyman who knows and loves his people, and is known and loved by them; a good congregation; a fine band of loyal workers; keen missionary enthusiasm; and a lot more fine things? What need can such a parish have of a Mission at all?" Let me try to answer this question.

Now clearly a Mission is most likely to achieve its end when those who are responsible know quite distinctly what they want it to achieve,—when, that is to say, it has a definite aim and object. Let us consider one or two possible aims. And in each case I shall have one or more parishes that I have known definitely in my mind as I write.

(i) One sometimes finds a church which, for some

reason or other, is not popular. Something in its past history, or in the circumstances under which the parish was formed, has been against it. Neighbouring churches are well attended. But this church is never more than half full. The majority of the people in the parish have nothing special against it. They simply don't attend. As a clergyman said to me, only a week or two before this paragraph was written, "It has never been the fashion to go to St. Blank's. It has never been well attended since it was built." Now pastoral methods, careful teaching, and prayer will certainly gather a keen and missionary-hearted congregation, and a loyal and capable band of workers. But the congregation may still be small, and the majority of the parishioners unaffected. Perhaps the church seats seven hundred, and the average evening congregation seldom touches three hundred. Here is an ideal state of things for a Mission. The congregation feel that they are indeed "the body of Christ" in that place. Christ desires to win every soul in the parish. But if He is to do so it can only be by His working in and through the members of the congregation. They are responsible for all their neighbours. Being truly missionary-hearted they cannot, and will not, use the words of Cain, the murderer, and say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Such a congregation, if they get the right missioner (and even if they don't, since the Missioner is far from being the most important factor in a Mission) may change the face of the parish. People's memories are short, so it is quite possible that five years later you may be told, "Oh! St. Blank's. They are always full. But then it has always been a well-attended church."

(ii) Again some churches, where good work has been done for eight or ten years, are not badly attended, but the congregation, with the exception of a few faithful old worshippers whom nothing would ever drive away from church, is almost wholly

composed of young people under thirty years of age, or even younger. The Sunday Schools, the clubs, and the guilds are full, but the parents do not attend church except at the Harvest Thanksgiving, or the Sunday School "Anniversary." Under such circumstances work, however successful, is what I call wasteful work. A disproportionately large number of the children of the Sunday Schools, and other organizations, will drift away as they grow up. For the example of parents is very powerful. I believe the condition of things I have been describing is far commoner than many people suppose. Some years ago the clergyman of a big, and I should say well-worked, industrial parish told me that not two per cent. of the fathers, or ten per cent. of the mothers, of the children in his Day and Sunday Schools were communicant members of his church. Here, again, if the congregation and workers are ready and keen, there is a great chance for a Mission. Middle-aged people, confirmed in habits of carelessness and indifference, are admittedly hard to move. But they can be converted, and a Mission can convert them.

(iii) Another very common state of things is where there is a good congregation, but the bulk of the members come from outside the parish. This is specially common in big towns, and in large central city parishes where the better class parishioners have moved away, but still worship at the church where they were brought up. I have nothing to say against people behaving in this way. In the present condition of the Church of England—and indeed in view of the constitution of human nature—it would be a great hardship to require people always to attend the church of the parish in which they reside. Nevertheless a church, no matter how well attended, is not doing its duty if it fails to touch the people living round it. It is a failure, even though it is packed to the doors, if most of the people of the parish go no-

where. And in this failure priest and congregation alike share. The Vicar, when he was inducted, was given the charge of a parish, not of a congregation. It is for their souls that he will have to give an account at the Last Day. The congregation, too, cannot divest themselves of responsibility simply because they do not live where they worship. Rather their responsibility is the greater. The parish church belongs to, and is meant for, the parishioners. If people from outside avail themselves of its hospitality there is just so much the more reason why they should try to evangelize the neighbourhood round the altar where they receive the Bread of Life. There could be few better reasons for holding a Mission than that supplied by the determination of such a congregation to do their duty to the parish of their choice. The task will be a hard one. But I have known many cases where it has been successfully accomplished.

(iv) Perhaps however, the commonest, and one of the best, reasons for a Mission is supplied by the fact that there is one portion of the parish which the church hardly seems to touch. It may be a portion of the parish which is distinctly poorer than the rest. It may be rather remote, the end of the parish farthest from the church. It may be cut off from the rest of the parish by a big main road, or a railway line, or a steep hill. I have known quite a number of cases in which one or other of these seemingly trifling obstacles was enough to keep people away. Of course, if there is a fully consecrated Mission Church in such a district a Mission for the whole parish may be unnecessary. But if there is no provision at all, or only an unconsecrated Mission Room, or School where an evening service is held, then it is mere cowardice, and lack of trust in the efficacy of prayer and the power of God the Holy Ghost, to be content to go on saying, " Of course, you can't expect people

of that sort to come to ordinary church services. They simply won't come, to mix with better class people. There's the great clothes difficulty. You are only wasting your time trying to get hold of them." Nobody denies that the Roman Catholics get such people into church. Why should not we? There can be no reason why it should not be universally done, for I have known churches, not many certainly, but several in various towns, where it has been done. A glorious objective for any Parochial Mission would be the winning for Christ of the poorest people in the parish.

(v) There is another set of circumstances, of a very different type, which justifies a Mission. When a clergyman first comes to a parish he meets perhaps with no little success. The number of Easter communicants rises year after year. Statistics reveal a steady increase in all departments of the work. But after a while this ceases. There may be no going backwards, but there is little or no advance. The clergyman feels that he is still, so to speak, gathering in, but for each handful that he picks up he drops nearly as many. And looking back over a few years he sees many lapsed members, many who were once zealous grown cold and indifferent, and some quite alienated, for no reasonable cause, from the church they once attended. Under such circumstances a clergyman often decides, quite wrongly I am sure, that his work in that particular parish is done and that he ought to leave, and give a new man a chance. Now I am all in favour of long incumbencies. Not all men, of course, are suited to all parishes, and a man splendidly equipped for one type of work may be a total failure if he gets into the wrong place. But if a man has ever been a success in a particular parish, and nothing unusual and extraordinary has happened to alter the character of the neighbourhood, and the man himself is not past work, it seems unlikely that

one who was once a round peg in a round hole should, in eight or ten years, have become a square peg. So before making up his mind that his work in a parish is done, and deciding to go elsewhere, where he will have to begin all over again, learning to know his people and his parish afresh, he might at any rate consider whether a Parochial Mission might not give his ministry a new lease of life. For if the master-word of pastoral work was spoken, as I am convinced it was, by Christ when He said, "I know my sheep, and am known of Mine,"[1] it would seem to follow that, other things being equal, one incumbency of fifteen years must yield more fruit than three averaging five years each. Some years ago a clergyman said to me, "I've been five years in my present parish and I feel that my work there is done." I replied, "Surely you mean that it is just beginning. I don't believe a man begins to do his best work till he marries the boys and girls he prepared for confirmation when he first came to the parish." If a Mission is prompted by such considerations as these, it will have as its chief objective the reclaiming of lapsed communicants and the more intense and deep-reaching conversion of those only formally connected with the church. This work may well be more difficult than that of drawing in those who were never influenced by religion at all. But it can be done. With God all things are possible.

(vi) So far, in this chapter, I have been considering the circumstances which, to my mind, render a Mission inadvisable, and again those which call for a Mission. In conclusion I must glance at one set of conditions which make the question a very difficult one to decide. I mean the case, so sadly common in the Midlands and the North, where a clergyman is single-handed in a parish of anything up to 12,000 people; or with only one colleague and 17,000 or

[1] John x. 14.

20,000. He does his best, and gathers a keen congregation. But the mere routine of ordinary parish duties makes anything like aggressive evangelistic work impossible. Should he have a Mission? On the one hand it is a terrible thing to go on, month after month, and year after year, with whole streets in one's parish absolutely untouched. On the other hand, it is a very grave responsibility to have a Mission, and then not be able to look after, teach, and hold those brought in, "building them up on their most holy faith."[1] Indeed for anyone who has been deeply moved by a Mission to be allowed to sink back into indifference and carelessness is infinitely worse than if nothing had ever been done. It may mean the ruin of a soul. What then should a clergyman do in such a case?

Each case should be judged on its merits, but I am inclined to say that the answer depends on the quality of the voluntary workers of the parish. Is everything that can possibly be done by the laity left to the laity? Are organization, finance, secretarial work, and all such matters, taken off the shoulders of the clergy, so that they can "give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word"?[2] And more than this: are there lay workers capable of "labouring in the word and doctrine"?[3] Are there, that is to say, men who can be trusted to address Bible Classes, to preach in the street, to conduct and speak at Mission Services in schools and mission rooms? Are there ladies capable of taking at any rate the bulk of the work of preparing women and girls for Confirmation, leaving to the clergy only the last few classes? The other day I looked up, in Crockford, a parish in the south which I used to know as a boy. There were five priests for a population of 1,400. The same night I preached at a church here in Lancashire where for

[1] Jude 20. [2] Acts vi. 4. [3] 1 Tim. v. 17.

twenty years a clergyman has been single-handed with 14,000 people. Obviously the question whether a Mission could be profitably undertaken in the latter parish will depend on the extent to which the efforts of the priest are supplemented by really consecrated lay workers.

So, then, to any clergyman debating with himself whether to have a Mission or not, I would say, "Do not have a Mission for the sake of having one. Ask yourself why you want one, and what exactly it is that you hope it may achieve." Having faced these obvious questions, and found an answer, the parish priest should go on to ask two more, namely, whether the parish is in a condition likely to make the Mission a success, and whether, supposing it is a success, he has the workers, organization, and accommodation for dealing with those brought in. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."[1]

[1] Luke xiv. 28-30.

CHAPTER III

THE PREPARATION FOR A MISSION: (i) PRELIMINARY

When a parish priest, after earnest thought and prayer, is led to desire a Mission, he should first discuss the matter privately with the most sensible and spiritually minded of his workers. If there is an Evangelistic Sub-Committee of the Church Council they would be the natural persons for this purpose. If they agree that the time is ripe for a Mission the matter should be brought formally before the full Council. I am convinced that it is a great mistake to discuss the matter with the general congregation, or indeed to allow it to be known about at all, till the Church Council has debated the question. Indeed if, while the parson is silently turning the matter over in his heart, and praying about it, some lay member of the Council should be moved to ask for a Parochial Mission, the prospects of success will indeed be good. The Council exists to co-operate with the clergy in spiritual as well as in business matters. The more the interest, sympathy, and co-operation of the Council can be secured the better.

If the full Council decides that a Mission should be held the Evangelistic Sub-Committee will naturally be asked to consider detailed plans and to report. For this work a quite small sub-committee is best, though advice on special points may be sought from people specially concerned. The chief points which should be decided by the Sub-Committee are:

(i) Date of Mission; whether autumn or spring.

(ii) Length of Mission.
(iii) Number of Missioners required.
(iv) Whether to have a Children's Mission at the same time, or later.
(v) How many visitors required.
(vi) Whether to have a preliminary Campaign of the Diocesan Women Messengers, or other organization, first.
(vii) How best to present the matter to the general congregation.

Let us consider each of the points in detail.

(i) *Proposed date and length of Mission.* The date of a Mission is an important matter. It should be, at the very least, a year after the Council has decided to have one. For obvious reasons the summer is an inappropriate time. Missions between Easter and Whitsuntide, Rogationtide Missions, were popular some twenty years ago. I do not recommend them. Much of the enthusiasm generated is lost during the summer holidays. The ideal times for Missions are, I hold, October and November, and again Septuagesima-tide, and early Lent. September hardly allows time for the intensive work of preparation which should mark the last six weeks before a Mission, since many workers will be on their holidays in August. Lent has this disadvantage that it is difficult to get missioners; parish priests are busy with their own Lenten work, and members of religious communities are engaged with other special duties. Whether it is decided to hold the Mission in the October-November period, or in the early spring, must be settled by local considerations. When is the usual confirmation held? If it is too soon after the Mission there may be insufficient time for preparing those drawn in by the Mission. Are there likely to be public engagements, a Civic Week, an annual Bazaar, or Sale of Work, which cannot be omitted for the year but which must not come too soon before or after, or a Church

Congress or Anglo-Catholic Congress? In these days of multiplied engagements it is impossible altogether to avoid clashing. But the fullest possible thought should be given to the question of date, as it affects the Mission itself, and the preparation, and the after-work.

(ii) Closely associated with the question of date is that of the length of the Mission. And here I want to speak very plainly. I believe more Missions fail because they are too short than for all other reasons put together. The usual ten days, when the Missioners are received on Saturday evening, and leave the following Monday or Tuesday week, is altogether too short. For what usually happens at a Mission? If it has been well prepared for there should be a large congregation the first Sunday. But no amount of visiting will persuade some people that they are expected to come to church on a week-night. The congregation will therefore be small on Monday; better on Tuesday; better still on Wednesday; while Thursday may well be the bumper day of the week, on which the church is almost as full as on the first Sunday. On Friday there is almost sure to be a falling off, at least in working class parishes, since many women and girls have household duties that night. On Saturday there is so sure to be a relatively small congregation, of the more regular church-goers, that many Missioners do not have a regular Mission service, but use the night for a devotional service in preparation for Holy Communion, or else sit in church all the evening for personal interviews and hearing confessions. But on the second Sunday the church will probably be packed. Indeed, I have known many cases where, on the second Sunday, people have been turned away. What, then, is the Missioner to do? He finds himself faced with a great congregation, many of whom—and those probably the most careless and least impressionable—are present for the first

time. On the one hand he wants to be teaching, and edifying, those already interested; on the other hand he wants to present again the message of conversion and decision. And if he leaves on Monday or Tuesday he leaves just as he has got his opportunity to do some effective work. What wonder that many, one might almost say most, Ten Day Missions fail? I believe the ideal time for a Mission would be three weeks, i.e. four Sundays. The whole of the first week, up to and including Thursday, would be devoted to preaching about sin, repentance, conversion and decision. Practically the same teaching, but in new words and with new texts and new illustrations, would be given the next week, at least on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, and possibly up to Thursday. Those who had heard it already would gladly hear it again, and would benefit by it. Those who had not heard it would have a chance to hear for the first time what is the real message of the Mission. Friday and Saturday could be devoted to private interviews and confessions. And the whole of the last week would not be too long for that instruction in prayer, Bible reading, meditation, public worship and communion, with exhortations on foreign missions and social service, which are so needed by those who, having heard the Saviour's call, are crying out in response, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"[1] Unfortunately two things make "Four Sunday Missions" almost impossible. The first, and most serious, is that there are few parishes where either the clergy or Church Council can be persuaded that such a period is necessary or possible. Indeed one is often met, when one suggests a far shorter time, with the objection, "Our people would never stand it. They don't like coming out in the evening. You'll find that even a full week is more than most of them can stand. There are so many other engagements. It is

[1] Acts ix. 6.

better, surely, to get a full church for a few nights than to risk a total failure by carrying it on too long." The fact that all this is based on a complete misunderstanding does not help us. When it is tried experience always proves that the attendance improves with time, and that the longer the Mission is the more certain the people are to say, at the end, "We wish it were going to last another week. It's just beginning really to grip the parish." But as people cannot be persuaded of this beforehand, and as when they are convinced it is too late, it is little good suggesting such a period. The other objection is that few parochial clergy can be absent from their parishes for four Sundays in the autumn or spring; while those members of religious communities who conduct Missions find the constant strain quite heavy enough as it is. But I have long been convinced that two full weeks, three Sundays, is the minimum period for an effective Mission. If the Missioner cannot be away from his own parish for three Sundays, almost the same result may be obtained by his staying till the Friday or Saturday of the Second Week, and leaving the parochial clergy to use the third Sunday as the great Thanksgiving Day of the Mission.

But the arguments for, and against, two, three, and four Sundays for the Mission should be thoroughly discussed by the sub-committee, and the results of their deliberations laid before the Church Council.

(iii) A very important question is that of the number of Missioners required. I am convinced that the Senior Missioner should do nothing, or very very little, except the great Mission Service, each night. I have known cases where he has undertaken a number of other duties with the result that he has gone into the pulpit at night too physically and spiritually exhausted, to deliver his message. To some people it will seem that a clergyman who, for two full weeks, does nothing but conduct one service, of

under an hour and a half, each day is having a very lazy time. And if such a man pleads to be allowed to be undisturbed in his own room for the greater part of each day, they will feel inclined to say "Surely he ought to have prepared his addresses before he came." They forget, or are ignorant of, two things: firstly, that the right sort of mission preaching is a tremendous strain, since a man has so to throw himself into the work that, at the end, he feels, as his Master did, that "virtue has gone out of him"[1]; and secondly, that no matter how thoroughly a mission course has been prepared each point must be gone over, and meditated on, and prayed about, before it is delivered. No Mission ever takes quite the expected course. By the second or third day one is sure to be obliged to reconsider, revise, and largely recast, one's plans. So if there is only one Missioner possible, the daily programme should include little more than the early celebrations and the chief Mission Service.

On the other hand, in every parish there are sure to be women who, for one reason or another, cannot come to the Mission Service at night. If a special afternoon service for women can be provided on three or four afternoons each week it will be an excellent thing. For this an Assistant Missioner, to whom the Sunday morning sermons may also be left, will be needed. They should be real "mission" services; that is to say, they should contain their full share of directly evangelistic preaching. And very plain and direct teaching on prayer, Bible study and similar devotional matters will be valued by women who perhaps are just beginning, as mothers, to realize their own ignorance and need of teaching.

If the parish contains any considerable number of mills, factories, railway yards, or other places where many men and women are employed, special dinner hour services, in church, or better still in the works

[1] Mark v. 30.

themselves, or perhaps best of all on some open space near several big works, are opportunities of much good. For these a special Men's Missioner will be required. And he should be a man used to open-air work, something of a debater, and able to reply, effectively and with good temper, to questioners and hecklers. He may also take a Men's Service on the Sunday afternoons; and possibly also do some work with the week-night open-air processions before the Mission Service (see pp. 70, 72).

Then there is the Children's Missioner. But he will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Now clearly few parishes can use four missioners. In artisan parishes there is the difficulty of hospitality, since the vicarage or clergy-house will probably not house that number. But only a few parishes would need four. In some the same man can do both women's and men's special services. Or a good man from a not too distant parish can come over daily for the afternoon services for women, three days a week, and the Children's Missioner can do the other "odd jobs," such as Sunday morning sermons, and open-air talks. But clearly the question of how many men the parish can effectively use, and with how few the really necessary work can be done, and how best to use whatever number may be possible, is one which the sub-committee must go into very carefully.

(iv) Closely connected with what we have just been considering is the question whether to have a Children's Mission at the same time as the general parish Mission or at some other time. Two methods of solving this problem are, I am quite sure, inexpedient. One is to have the Children's Mission first, and the general Mission some time later. This tends to fritter away mission enthusiasm, and leaves on the minds of many people the idea that missions are things for children. I do not think I have ever known good results from this arrangement. Another plan is to

have the Children's Mission immediately after the parish Mission. I have only known this plan to be adopted twice, though I believe one well-known missioner advocates it. I am convinced that it is bad. The clergy and workers of a parish should find all, and more than all, their time occupied after a Mission gathering in the fruits. If they are busy with the Children's Mission for a week or ten days after the general Mission, it may be three weeks or a month before some person who has been deeply affected can be visited and dealt with. By which time he or she may well be feeling chilled, disappointed and angry.

There remain, therefore, the two alternatives, to have the Mission for Children at the same time as that for the parish generally, or to have it some months later, in Septuagesima-tide or Lent if the general Mission has been in October, or in October if the general Mission was in the previous spring. There is much to be said in favour of both courses. If the two are held at the same time the children themselves unconsciously act as mission visitors in many houses. They talk about the Mission; they take home invitations to their parents to attend the great Mission Service; the cards or other things given them at their own services are seen and talked about in every home. Then, too, there is no grievance, no feeling that "there's nothing for the children"; and if children under school age, not accompanied by adults, are excluded from the Mission Service, there is the obvious defence, "They have a service of their own to come to." And the wider the appeal the greater will be the enthusiasm generated. On the other hand, the disadvantages of having both Missions at once are, if less obvious, not less numerous than the advantages. Many parents will be content to "send the childer to th' Mission" and think that their duty to it ends there. The number of parents, in every class, who think that their duty to God is fully performed when

the children have been packed off to church or Sunday School is deplorable. It is a distinct advantage to be able to say that the Mission has nothing to do with children. "This is God's message to *you*. You must take it or leave it yourself." Then, too, the workers with children, the Sunday School and Ragged School teachers, the Band of Hope workers, and those who run the guilds and other children's organizations, are usually the keenest and best workers. If these are busy with the Children's Mission the more important work of the Parish Mission may suffer. Or it may possibly be that the Sunday School staff itself is unsatisfactory, keen and zealous and hard-working but lacking in spirituality and in churchmanship. Idolatry of the Sunday School, especially in the North, is not unknown, and where it exists in an extreme form not infrequently produces a positive hostility to the Church. A Mission may be an opportunity for the teachers to obtain just what they need "when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."[1] If, however, there is a Children's Mission at the same time, they will be so busy with it that, even if they do not make it an excuse for absenting themselves altogether from the great Mission Services, their own souls will be unfed.[2] And finally, if the General Mission is a success there are few better ways of holding the converts than to set them to work preparing for the Children's Mission. And whereas a Children's Mission held some time before the Parish Mission seems to have little or no power to rouse interest and enthusiasm for the bigger effort, a Children's Mission held after the Parish Mission often revives and consolidates the enthusiasm of the whole congregation in a remarkable way.

The reason for this is both interesting in itself and

[1] Acts iii. 19.

[2] This will seem an imaginary danger to many. A few clergy, especially in the North, will know its reality by bitter experience.

important as bearing on the subject under discussion. It is that a Parochial Mission is, or at any rate ought to be, the occasion of Conversion and Decision. This a Children's Mission, for children under school age, should not, and I think, cannot be. I have developed this view in another place,[1] and need not repeat myself. I will only say that emotional appeals to quite young children to declare themselves converted seem to me never useful and often dangerous. I know, of course, that many people disagree with me on this point. But that is my opinion. The work of the Children's Missioner should, I hold, be one rather of instruction, and of call to service, than of distinctively evangelistic preaching. It may therefore not unreasonably be undertaken at a separate time, and the converts of the Parish Mission should find suitable scope in it for their energies.

What I have said will indicate my own preference. But two separate efforts, at an interval of not more than six months at the most, are in some parishes an unattainable ideal. Unless the Vicar has any very strong reasons for desiring one method rather than another it will be best to lay the pros and cons before the subcommittee and to let them decide; not forgetting to take the views of the Sunday School teachers.

(v) When the scope of the Mission—i.e. whether it is to include a Children's Mission, whether there are to be dinner-hour services, what special arrangements if any are to be made for Men and for Women, and what open-air work is to be attempted—has been decided, an estimate must be made of the number of workers required. Let a map of the parish be obtained; the number of streets, and the number of houses in each street, carefully counted, and the special character of the streets noted. If the parish, or any portion of it, is predominantly Roman Catholic or

[1] The introduction to my book, "Teaching for Lads" (Ed. Arnold).

Jewish, each "district" can safely contain a greater number of houses than elsewhere. On the other hand, where there are several families in each house,[1] six houses may well be a heavy district to visit since each family must be dealt with separately. In normal cases twenty to thirty houses is ample. Then, too, if many members of the congregation come from outside the parish these also will need visiting, and will require the Mission letters (see pp. 66-68) to be left. Nothing in the way of house to house visiting, of course, must be attempted outside one's own parish. But it would be too pedantic an observance of clerical etiquette to forbid visitation of those who already attend the church. Some people will argue that since the chief object of a Mission is to draw in the outsider those who already come do not need attention. But this displays ignorance of human nature. Few people know the boundaries of the parish they live in, and if the people who live on one side of John Street are all visited while many who live on the other side, and who "have been attending Trinity Church all our lives" are ignored, the latter are far more likely to be offended than to remember that one side of John Street is, and the other is not, in the parish of Holy Trinity. Again, one or two members only of a family may attend the church; the Mission is an opportunity to gain the whole family. So to the lists of streets and houses in the parish must be added a list, drawn up from the Communicants' Roll, the Sunday School Registers, and the books of the various organizations, of those who live outside. Let me state, here and now, that since it is very difficult to make this absolutely complete, it is well, when the actual visitation for the Mission begins, to put a notice in the parish magazine, and to give out in church, that any persons resident in the parish, who have not received a

[1] In a recent Mission the visitors found, in nine large old houses let out in single rooms, no less than 75 families.

" Mission Letter " by such and such a date, should mention the fact to the Secretary, as it is proof of some mistake, but that anyone living at a distance who has not received one must take it as proof that it has been impossible to visit all who come from a distance; adding that such are invited to ask for a " Mission Letter " each week as they leave church.

When the number of houses to be visited has been ascertained the Sub-Committee will know how many visitors are needed. Visiting, except in the case of experienced visitors who prefer to play a lone hand, should be done in pairs. This will prove easier, pleasanter, and more effective. Take for instance the not uncommon case where a visitor is admitted to a house but finds everyone present, either from shyness or some other reason, stonily silent. A series of questions suggests the Census man, and may easily give offence. A flow of monologue is both difficult to maintain and of little use. The situation is difficult to handle while it lasts and even more difficult to bring to a dignified end. But if two visitors work together the difficulty vanishes. One chats brightly for a minute or two and then appeals to the other for confirmation. The ball of conversation is tossed lightly backward between them and it will be strange if all present are not soon drawn in. The ideal plan is to have two lady visitors, who can call in the afternoon at each house, and two men visitors, covering perhaps several of the " districts " allotted to the ladies, who will visit men and lads at night. The reason why men may reasonably be asked to cover more ground than the women is (*a*) that if the ladies do the preliminary visiting, the men will be spared the trouble of going at all to such houses as belong to Jews, Roman Catholics, or people who either already attend somewhere else, or have no men or lads needing a call; (*b*) that whereas many ladies cannot well spare more than one or two afternoons a week, a man if he

is once really keen, will often visit night after night the week through, and (*c*) that if the work is to be done at all they will have to do so, since though men are certainly not less keen than women, they are, unfortunately, less often keen.

Not till the Sub-Committee has a clear idea of the work to be attempted, and of the number of workers that such work will require, will it be possible to draw up a satisfactory plan of campaign.

(vi) One very important point the Sub-Committee must consider. Is the parish as a whole, or is any particular part of the parish, in such a state as to make it undesirable to have a Mission at all? What I have written in the first chapter should make it plain that a wise Sub-Committee might conceivably report that there was not, in the parish, the requisite keenness or the necessary spirit of evangelization. If, for instance, something like 150 keen visitors are required, and the most optimistic estimate of those likely to offer themselves falls short of 30, the Sub-Committee might advise postponing the Parish Mission and having a Missionary Mission, or a Campaign of Service, or a Parochial Retreat or Quiet Day. Where, however, the Church Council has shown real interest in the idea of a Mission this should not be the case. On the other hand it may well happen that some part of the parish presents special difficulties. Let me take a concrete instance. In my own parish we proposed to have a Mission. But there was one very poor, and rather awkwardly situated, portion where ordinary parochial methods had never been very successful. I therefore sent for one of the most successful and experienced parish priests in Lancashire and, having taken him a walk round the parish, and explained my difficulties, and told him how all my most trusted workers feared lest a Mission should leave this portion of the parish still untouched, I asked him for his advice. He asked when the Mission was to be held, and when

I said that it was due during the October-November period of the following year, he replied, " Then have a preliminary Campaign, conducted by the Women Messengers of the Diocese, before Lent next year, and let them concentrate on this difficult part of the parish." I took his advice and had the help of six Women Messengers for a week just before Lent. And when the Parish Mission was held at the latter end of the following October it was just in that part of the parish where the Messengers had worked that the response was greatest. They held services and meetings for women, for adolescents and for children, both in Church and in the Mission Room belonging to the district ; they held prayer meetings and cottage meetings in any houses where they were made welcome ; and they visited from house to house. Their campaign aroused the enthusiasm of the workers, and afforded them a kind of full-dress rehearsal of their duties in the Parish Mission, and started efforts which we tried to carry on and develop during Lent and the summer. Above all it awakened the interest and sympathy of the people themselves. If, therefore, when the Mission is being discussed, people say, " No doubt it will do a lot of good, at least in the greater part of the parish, but it is not very likely to touch the Mill Street district. You'll never get those people to come up to the Parish Church," the Sub-Committee should give serious consideration to the question whether there should not be a preparatory campaign in that district. If there are no Women Messengers in the diocese, some other plan must be followed. The Church Army might be approached, for the temporary help of some evangelists and sisters. Or the Diocesan Missioner might be able to help. Or some not too distant parish, where a Mission has recently been held, and where the workers are still keen and anxious for work, might be invited to send an evangelistic party into the particular district for a

week. I confess I have only known this done in one case, but it was a great success then. Doubtless it is an experiment and needs care. Yet anything is better than sitting down under the conviction that one whole portion of the parish must be regarded as hopeless, and looked to for no results.

(vii) The last question for discussion by the Sub-Committee will be the best way of bringing the matter before the general congregation. I am sure the initiative should be taken by the Vicar himself. He should preach a sermon explaining clearly what a Mission is, why he wants one, what he hopes it will effect, and what the part played by the congregation ought to be. As an outcome of that, there may be a Quiet Afternoon for all parish workers, to which everyone doing any kind of church work should be urged to come. This should not merely be open to other members of the general congregation; each worker should be urged to try to bring one or more friends likely to be willing to volunteer for the service. The Conductor should be asked to deal not so much with the practical details of a mission helper's work, since the Missioner himself will deal with that on the occasion of his first visit (see p. 50), but with such topics as self-consecration, service, and dependence on God the Holy Spirit. It is not a bad plan to set aside a season (none could be more suitable than Advent) for a series of Sunday evening sermons by special preachers, on different aspects of the work of Home Missions. It will, of course, require some careful arrangement, so that there may not be repetition or overlapping on the part of the preachers. But if each is asked to take a special subject, and told what the other subjects are, and who is taking them, this difficulty ought not to be serious. Here is a possible syllabus for Advent:

(i) The need for the conversion of present-day England.

(ii) The nature of the evangelistic work of the Home Church.

(iii) The place and responsibility of the laity in the spiritual work of the Church.

(iv) The power of God the Holy Ghost, working through consecrated lives.

Or the period between Easter and Ascension Day may be used for special sermons on the Mission, and then the three Rogation Days may be used for something like a parochial retreat (not for people who can go off for the whole time to a Retreat House, but for everyone in the parish who can attend an early celebration each day, and will give up the evening hours for special prayer) and the whole effort can culminate on Ascension Day. The gospels for the five Sundays seem to suggest suitable topics. Thus :

(i) A commission from the risen Lord.
As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. St. John xx. 21.

(ii) The Saviour's love for all the souls he died for.
I am the Good Shepherd and know My sheep and am known of Mine.—St. John x. 14.

(iii) Religion the greatest need of a joyless and distracted world.
Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.—St. John xvi. 22.

(iv) The promise of the Holy Spirit.
He will reprove (convict) the world of sin.—St. John xvi. 8.

(v) The boundless power of prayer.
Ask, and ye shall receive.—St. John xvi. 24.

These suggested courses, for Advent or Eastertide, are of course no more than suggestions. Plenty of other, and plenty of better, ones will suggest themselves. If one, or all three, of the Rogation Days can be kept as a Whole Day of Prayer as suggested in *The Town Parson*[1] so much the better.

[1] Chapter VI., § xii., pp. 229-230.

In some parishes I have known there has been a special sermon on the coming Mission, by a special preacher, once a month for six months or a year before the actual date. But I think a short concentrated effort, such as I have described, is better than a long-drawn-out one, when the special sermons come at fairly long intervals. The latter may bore the people, and weary them with the Mission; the former will, I fancy, generate a great deal of enthusiasm.

There are, of course, other methods of presenting the subject of the Mission to the general congregation, and of arousing their interest and enlisting their co-operation. But these seem the most obvious.

When the Sub-Committee has decided on the date of the Mission, and its length, on the number of Missioners the parish needs and can entertain, and whether the Children's Mission is to be held at the same time or later, on the number of visitors needed, on the need, or otherwise, for any preliminary Campaign, and on the methods to be recommended for presenting the matter to the general congregation, the Secretary, or the Vicar himself, should present a full, careful and detailed report to the Council for their discussion and acceptance. Any modifications suggested by the Council should be sympathetically considered and, if sound, accepted.

The next step is to secure the Senior Missioner. He, with the Vicar, will choose the Assistant Missioner or Missioners. It is scarcely necessary to emphasize the importance of getting not merely a good man but the right man for the parish. Some parishes will benefit immensely from the highly-trained missioner who comes from one of the Communities. Some may do better under the care of the diocesan missioner or of an ordinary parish priest. Unless the Vicar knows a suitable man he should seek the advice of friends.

Directly the Missioner has accepted the invitation

he should be asked : (*a*) to say what mission hymn-book he prefers ; and (*b*) to send a list of the hymns in it which he will use, together with notes as to any tunes he may wish altered. Several copies of this should be made so that each of the clergy, the organist and any players who may deputize for him, and any others concerned, may each have one. The organist himself should be asked to go through this list carefully, and to say if there are any tunes to which he takes exception on musical grounds. If he objects too widely, wishing to cut out all hymns of an emotional character, and all tunes not of the highest musical value, he should be reasoned with kindly but firmly. It should be pointed out to him that a Mission is a very special effort, with a very special character and aim of its own, and that it is as unreasonable to claim that the hymns sung at it should be of the type suitable for Cathedral Mattins as it would be to exclude from comic opera, or a popular ballad concert, any tune that would jar if inserted in the middle of Bach's Mass in B Minor, or in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. On the other hand, our organists are, quite definitely, the custodians of our church's musical traditions, and many of them are making heroic efforts to root out weak, effeminate, unworthy tunes. In this we clergy should help and not hinder. So if the organist really feels strongly the Missioner should give way. A little give and take on each side will usually settle matters, and I am glad to say I can look back on my organists and assistant organists, at most of the Missions I have taken, with the greatest pleasure.

CHAPTER IV

THE PREPARATION FOR A MISSION: (ii) IMMEDIATE

As soon as a suitable Senior Missioner has been chosen he should be asked to visit the parish, and meet the workers. He should not be asked to meet, still less to preach to, the general congregation. But the workers he must meet. They are to be *his* workers; he, under God, is to be *their* Master. A week evening is the best time, and the Schools or Parish Hall the right place. The Missioner will first address the workers, explaining his methods of work, and what he desires in the way of preparation. And at the close of his address questions should be invited, and the fullest and frankest discussion welcomed. Each missioner has his own methods, but the immediate preparation for a Mission may be regarded as made up of four things: (i) Prayer; (ii) Special efforts varying with the character of the parish; (iii) Visiting; and (iv) Supply of apparatus.

(i) *Prayer.* If I say that the success of a Mission depends more on prayer than on everything else put together, some people will suspect me of uttering a pious platitude. On the contrary, I am making a plain statement of fact which every experienced Missioner would endorse. I do not say that prayer alone will do the necessary work if visiting is neglected, for God does not do for us what we could and should do for ourselves. But prayer has power to move mountains, and any restraint of prayer is fatal to a mission. What then are the best methods for securing a great volume of prayer? Here are a few:

(*a*) *The Prayer Card.* Prayers for the Mission should be printed on a card of convenient size (say 4 in. by 2 in.) for slipping into a prayer-book or book of devotions. It, like every other document issued in connection with the Mission, should be headed with the name of the Church, and the date of the Mission. A single prayer to be said daily, and a short prayer to be repeated frequently, are enough. Here is a specimen which may be found useful :

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH, SALFORD
PARISH MISSION
OCTOBER 16TH TO 31ST, 1926

Prayer to be said daily :

O FATHER of mercies, we humbly beseech Thee, to guide and prosper the Mission to be held in this parish ; fill the missioners and all the workers with wisdom, love and zeal ; seek and save the lost ; convert the careless ; teach the ignorant ; make the faithful more earnest ; bless the children ; and look with compassion upon all ; through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer to be learnt by heart and to be said frequently :
O GOD, bless the Mission to my soul, and to the souls of many more, and use us in Thy service ; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Another smaller card for children may read :

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH, SALFORD
CHILDREN'S MISSION
OCTOBER 16TH TO 31ST, 1926

Prayer to be said daily :

O LORD, bless the Mission to be held at St. Philip's Church. Bless my home, my parents, my brothers and sisters, and all Thy children, and keep me in Thy love, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The children's cards may be distributed freely through the Day Schools and Sunday Schools. Where adults are concerned I much dislike the broadcast distribution of such things. People just take them, slip them into any book they may happen to be carrying at the moment, and think no more of them. I have sometimes thought of charging ½d. each for the cards. The mere effort of asking for, and paying for, a card goes some way towards securing that it will be used. But people are always against me on this point. A compromise is to appoint a "Card Secretary" who gives cards to those only who ask for them. The duty of such a secretary will be to get rid of as many as possible, but not to offer them. He or she should seek to create a demand.

(*b*) *Scheme for a Week's intercession.* The devout church people should be capable of a great deal more than the recitation of a single prayer daily. Yet only a small proportion will be capable of drawing up their own scheme of intercession. This, of course, may be done for them in the parish magazine. But it is convenient to have something to put into people's hands. In the *Manchester Mission Manuals*[1] there is one by Canon Spencer Elliott, "A Scheme of Daily Intercession in Preparation for a Mission," and many others, each possessing some point of special excellence, are on the market. The best of all, to my mind, is one by the Rev. H. G. Moss, of Bolton, entitled, "A Scheme of Daily Prayer and Intercession in preparation for the Mission."[2] It seems to me to give just the help needed, and to encourage those who use it to make further efforts of their own. All to whom I have given it speak highly of it. The "Card Secretary" should supply these, and a charge should be made for them.

(*c*) *Public Prayer.* The Mission must be kept

[1] Published by R. Jackson, 5, Albion Place, Leeds.
[2] From the Author.

prominently before the minds of the people in public prayer. If there is not a Daily Eucharist one or more week-day celebrations should be started, care being taken to ascertain the hours at which it is possible for people to attend. Intercessions at evensong, one night a week, on the lines suggested in *The Town Parson*[1] will be appreciated. Special intercessions for the Mission may also be substituted for the "State prayers" after the Third Collect, at evensong on Sundays, now and then. Informal gatherings for prayer for different types of people, for men, for women, for lads, for girls, or for children are excellent. Here, if it is outside the times of the ordinary services, I am sure we ought to encourage and foster extemporary prayer. One of the weaknesses of the Church of England is our failure to draw out of our laity active witness to their faith in the form of prayer and preaching. I can see no possible harm, and immense possible good, in a number of women meeting in the Side Chapel, on a week-day afternoon, for common prayer. They choose their own leader. They sing a hymn. One reads a passage of scripture. There is a period of silence. The leader prays. The leader says "Will someone lead us in prayer for the missioners and clergy?" Someone prays. Then she says, "Will someone lead us in prayer for the children of the parish?" And so on, with a long list of subjects. It is a good thing to ask, at the end, if anyone will pray on any matter on which she feels deeply. I have known such afternoon meetings greatly valued, and I believe much blessed. An evening a week may be set apart for a similar meeting for girls, and another for young men and lads. In one Mission, of which I saw something, I believe the prayer meeting of the senior lads was one of the greatest influences for good. In country places "cottage meetings" in remote farms are, I believe, a valuable feature. But I have also

[1] Longmans, pp. 95-96.

found cottage meetings really useful in the poorest streets of great towns. If there is a keen and earnest woman in a street, suggest that she should ask a few neighbours in for an hour some afternoon. Then one of the clergy, or better still one of the lay workers, goes in with a few hymn-books and conducts the simplest and homeliest of services, just a hymn, a piece of scripture read and talked about, with of course special reference to the Mission, and then prayer. Hymns may be sung sitting. Stout or elderly people may be invited to remain seated during the prayers. Care should be taken not to stay too long, the hostess being asked beforehand by what hour she wants the meeting to be over. At the close those present may be asked whether they could invite any friends for a similar meeting in their houses. But indeed the offer to do so will often come spontaneously. The clergy and lay members of the staff will almost certainly have to start these things, and may even have to lead them for some time. The measure of their success will be the extent to which such meetings, whether in church or in the homes, can be maintained without the presence of the clergy.

(*d*) *Expanding Circles of Prayer.* It is obvious that the ordinary stolid English churchman or churchwoman is not going to engage freely in extempore prayer without training. If the things described in the last paragraph are attempted in the wrong way they will fail. And then the clergyman will decide that such methods are no doubt all very well in some parts of England, but that his own people don't respond to them. I want therefore to describe a method, which I have seen in actual practice, the value of which cannot be exaggerated. I will describe it as I first saw it. Two keen men, Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith, started it. It might have been difficult for Mr. Brown to say to other men, "Come and hear me talk about the Mission." It was quite easy to say

to four mates, "If you are not doing anything on Sunday night about 8.30 come in and see me. Sam Smith is coming in to tell us about this Mission they are going to have at the Church." Mr. Smith suggests saying a prayer before he begins. He says to Mr. Brown, "Jim, you might read us a bit out of the Bible. The first three verses of the tenth chapter of St. Luke would do." Then, sitting down and, if he thinks well, inviting all to light their pipes, he talks about the difficulty of getting young people to stick to their church; of the temptations at work; of the need for religion, etc., working up gradually to the subject of the Mission, its aims, methods, and needs. At the close of his talk he suggests (this is a vital matter; since where there is no prayer the meeting has failed) that they should lay aside their pipes and kneel round the table and pray. "I'll pray that God would bless the work; you, Jim, might make a bit of a prayer for the Missioners; then you other fellows might say a prayer for the workers; the children, sinners, and those who have got a bit careless." If he has been careful in his talk, to explain the difficulties of workers, the hopes for the children, the needs of sinners, etc., his hearers will be ready with ideas for prayer. If one, or even two, of the four guests are, as it were, secret accomplices who know that they will have to pray, it will not be amiss. After the prayer, Mrs. Brown produces a cup of tea or cocoa and there is free conversation. And Mr. Smith says, "I hope you'll all come to me next week. We'll let Jim here do the talking, and see if he can do any better than I did." As soon as the guests seem keen, and willing to pray, Mr. Smith asks two of them whether they could not ask four friends each into their houses to meet him. And Mr. Brown does the same with the other two. If they consent, as they will if the original four have been wisely picked, the Smith-Brown prayer group becomes four, Smith-

Jones, Smith-Robinson, Brown-Wilson and Brown-Thomson. These properly worked will each in turn break up into four new ones, till presently the whole parish is honeycombed with prayer groups. In the parish where I saw this most successful, a parallel movement went on among women. Mrs. McKenzie. the doctor's wife, asked a few friends to hear Mrs. Jenkyns, wife of the Bank manager, talk about the Mission. Mrs. Jenkyns returned the compliment. It is impossible for a Mission not to be a success when it is prepared for by a great volume of prayer. Many other methods will suggest themselves.

(ii) *Special Efforts.* During the year before the Mission no opportunity to arouse interest, to deepen spiritual life, and to strengthen the fighting forces of the parish, must be allowed to slip. But all efforts should, as has been hinted above, vary with, and be adapted to, the character of the parish. I believe many valuable methods both of ordinary parish work and of special evangelistic effort, have been discredited because they have been used in the wrong way, or in the wrong places. Take, for instance, open-air preaching. In well-to-do, middle class suburban parishes it is utterly useless. The ladies, who alone are to be seen walking about in the afternoons, would as soon think of dancing in the street as of standing round a preacher listening to him and joining in hymns. In the evening everyone is indoors in winter and otherwise engaged in the summer. Again, I have never found open-air services very much use on large main roads, except perhaps on Sundays, when there are always people walking about without much to do. On week-days, in a big main road, ninety-five per cent. of the people come from a distance, and are therefore not the people wanted for the Mission. In addition they won't stand round, and if they do the roar of traffic renders preaching

ineffective. But all this does not affect the immense value of open-air work in suitable parishes.

Again, house-to-house visiting has to be done in a very different way, in a parish of large well-to-do houses, where servants are kept, from that which is effective in a slum, or in a decent artisan neighbourhood. Indeed every special effort must be adapted to special needs. Let us consider a few.

(*a*) *Open-Air Services.* I have used, in the last paragraph, the expression "the immense value of Open-Air work." I am sure that, given the right conditions, the expression is a true one. What then are the right conditions? I think we may say that such work will be valuable anywhere off the main roads, anywhere that is to say away from the tram lines, where the social standing of the people is such that the children play in the street and the grown-up people stand at the doors. In other words, in all poor artisan parishes. My own experience tends to prove that open-air preaching is most successful when done by the laity. Before our own Mission it was carried on every Thursday evening, and often on Sunday afternoons, from Easter till the middle of October. On Sundays I could not be present; on Thursdays I was always present, unless kept away by some pressing engagement, but I never spoke. All was done by a keen band of laymen. And I believe it contributed enormously to the success of the Mission. On fine summer evenings, or warm afternoons, people gather willingly. As soon as the evenings begin to close in a few lanterns on sticks have a fine effect in dark streets and soon induce people to open their doors and come out. A surpliced choir is, I am sure, not necessary and, if the meetings are held weekly for a whole year, puts a needless strain on the loyalty of the choir boys. On the other hand, the more friends and helpers there are who will help to form a crowd, lead the singing, give out hymn-books, and talk to

anyone who seems interested, the better. In these days, when women do so much political and social work, there is, I am convinced, no reason why women speakers should not be allowed at such services. But as the witness of men is much needed by the Church to-day I would have men speakers predominate. If there are four addresses at a meeting—and four addresses of ten to twelve minutes are more popular and more effective than two of thirty minutes each—let there be three men and one woman. The main idea running through the addresses which prepared for our own mission was the slogan "We need you—You need us." They dealt with simple evangelistic topics such as the love of God, the emptiness of life without religion, the power of Christ to save from sin, the value of prayer and the best times and methods for prayer, the duty of parents to set an example to their children, and similar subjects. But all led up to an appeal, to those who stood round, to join us in worship and fellowship at their own parish church, and all contained some reference to the coming Mission. These regular weekly efforts generated an immense amount of enthusiasm among the workers, and expanded, naturally and without difficulty, into the more elaborate processions, with surpliced choir and lanterns, which went out night by night during the first week of the Mission, for an hour before the Mission Service, to draw in the crowd.

One further detail is worth mentioning. For Sunday afternoon services, and services on fine summer evenings, it is a good thing if some seating accommodation can be provided. Tired mothers, and old people, find long standing a trial. Let the workers, then, visit the street where the service is to be held, and the streets near it, and say, at any houses where the people are friendly, "Next Thursday we are having the service in Wickham Street. Can you lend us a few chairs? We will see you get your own back."

Then half an hour before the service lads from the Lads' Club go to each house that has promised chairs, and collect them, chalking the under side of each "W.13 (13 Wickham Street), or "G.P.7" (7 Grove Place). This arouses the interest of the neighbourhood. And, as every student of human nature knows, little favours asked are a much surer way of gaining friends than large favours offered.

(*b*) *Advertisement.* I have spoken of the people who pass along a great main thoroughfare as coming from a distance from the parish, and being therefore "not the people wanted for the Mission." This is true of ordinary parish churches, serving parishes with a resident congregation. But in most big towns there are churches of a different type. Well placed on a main road, or at the juncture of several tram routes, they are not the kind of churches that should be closed and pulled down. Yet the parishes they serve may be almost without population, wholly given over to offices, shops, warehouses or railway yards. Such churches may be worth maintaining for the sake of dinner-hour services on week-days alone; but if they are to have a Sunday congregation it must be drawn from outside. And in every big town there are enough people who for one reason or another don't want to attend their own parish church, to justify the provision such churches offer. Now it may frankly be admitted that such churches are not ideal places for Parochial Missions. Yet there is no reason why the people attending them, or who can by any means be drawn in, should not have the advantage of a mission. And, if extra care is taken to see that everyone so drawn in is spoken to personally, drafted into some guild, society, or other organization, and adequately shepherded after the Mission is over, an Evangelistic Mission in such a church may do a great deal of good. But clearly advertisement must largely take the place of visiting. Now advertisement on

hoardings, and in the press, while undoubtedly valuable, has two disadvantages; it is extremely expensive, and it produces little effect on those who see the posters, and read the notices, unless they already know where the church is. The more therefore the advertisement can be done *on the church itself* the better.

It may be questioned whether we make anything like enough use of advertisement. One, or at most two, not very distinctly lettered boards with lists of services, and another pasted over with civic notices about rates, etc., are what one usually sees. But where a church has a great expanse of railings abutting on main streets why not have a medium-sized board, to which printed bills may be pasted every twelve or fifteen yards? I know one such church which has twelve or fifteen such boards. One bill *on the church* is worth twenty on the public hoardings. And it is repetition that tells.

Here is a method which is cheap, easy, and amazingly successful. Stretch, on a framework of wood, a piece of strong but fairly transparent white stuff. What is called "book cloth" is what I have used. Select an uncoloured magic lantern slide, plain and bold in design, representing Christ carrying the Cross, or a Crucifix, or the Good Shepherd, or other suitable picture. Throw the picture on to the screen and trace out the main lines in charcoal. The picture can then be painted in with black paint. Obviously the best picture to choose is one simple in design, bold in outline, and without superfluous detail. One that I have used was fifteen feet by eight feet, and bore the legend, "He Calls You." Hung outside an old-fashioned city church, between two of the massive Corinthian pillars, it could be seen by everyone who passed by at a distance of eighty yards or more, whether they were walking or on a tram. Above, along the cornice of the Church, ran a strip of white cloth bearing the notice, in letters three feet high,

"Great Parish Mission." At night a strong arc lamp hung behind the sheet rendered it even more striking than by day.

Another good plan may be tried when there is a Clergy House—or other house where a room can be used—on a main street. Take one window bodily out, and replace it with a frame covered with waxed cloth, which enables a picture to be thrown on the screen from behind. Then from sunset till eleven p.m. let pictures, and written appeals, be thrown on the screen, each remaining on for two or three minutes and then giving place to another. The best coloured pictures should be used, such subjects as the Divine Face, the Crucifix, Christ praying in the Garden, etc., being suitable. The appeals can be written by hand, on suitably prepared glass surfaces, and each should bear a notice of the Mission, *with date*, thus: "St. Philip's, Salford. Great Parish Mission. October 16th to 31st,"—and some suitable appeal, such as "Won't you come and hear His message?" "He is calling You," "Come, and bring a Friend with you." As the crowd will be constantly changing, pictures and appeals can be repeated. Six of each will be ample. I tried this a good many years ago, when changing light signs, used as advertisements, were less common than now, and it produced something like a sensation. The comments of the crowds, as reported to me by the young men who shared the rather tedious task of working the lantern night after night, were always reverent, but often striking. To-day when changing signs are more common the effect might be less. Yet anywhere, except in some locality already over-crowded with competing signs, it should be worth trying.

Other methods of advertisement will no doubt suggest themselves. Some people will condemn all this, as vulgar and sensational; I am myself as much opposed as any man to catch-penny titles for sermons.

vulgar advertisements, and sensationalism generally. But where advertisement is necessary the striking and arresting need not necessarily be vulgar. Each case must be judged on its merits. A clergyman told me that some of his workers persuaded him to put up an advertisement of the Mission formed out of coloured fairy lights. It was no sooner up than the designer himself said it must come down. It suggested a Fancy Fair, not a Mission. All such details are matters for the Evangelistic Sub-Committee of the Church Council.

(*c*) *Personal Campaigns*. We have considered special efforts suited to a residential artisan parish (open-air preaching) and to a city church with a small population (arresting advertisements); what can be done in a parish of wealthy people? I will describe something, which I can only call a personal campaign, which wrought wonders in one such parish. Is it a lack of faith if I say that I fear the men to carry it out would too often be lacking? A small group of deeply religious laymen, all in important positions, a couple of wealthy merchants, a banker, a solicitor, a consulting surgeon and a retired army man, met and discussed the matter with prayer. They decided to work two and two. The banker then selected a man he knew in business and at the Club, a nominal churchman but no church-goer, and wrote to ask if he might call on him about 9 p.m. some evening to discuss a matter of importance. "I should like," he said, "to be able to talk to you alone, in your study, not in the drawing-room with your wife and family. Blank (the retired colonel) will be with me." On the evening he began by discussing the evils and dangers of post-war England, the social unrest, the class bitterness, the neglect of religion by young people, and so on. His host, not a bad fellow in any way, agreed with him heartily, and uttered some characteristic denunciations of the world to-day as compared with what it was when

he was young. He also explained what his own father would have said and done if young people had carried on, thirty years ago, as they do to-day. "Why, damme, sir, he'd have . . . etc., etc." When he had thoroughly committed himself the banker opened fire. He said he had known before he called that his host would agree with him, and was glad to find he was right. Nothing but religion could do any good. Well, they were having a Mission at the church in about a year and he and the Colonel were very anxious that the most should be made of it. The Vicar would be explaining the whole thing at the morning service on Sunday week. Would his host come with him and the Colonel on that occasion? The man had promised almost before he knew what he was doing. Then the banker asked the Colonel to pray for a blessing on the Mission, and when they all rose from their knees (the banker did not pray, nor was the host asked to pray; it was thought better not) the banker said, quite frankly, "You see now what I and the Colonel, and a few more of us, are up to. Will you join us? Is there any friend of yours we could visit in the same way? I or the Colonel would come with you." Similar work was carried on by the other members of the original group, and by an ever-growing band of earnest men. Of course there were failures, but on the whole they were outnumbered by the successes. One man tried jeering at the whole thing at the Club but got shut up by another member, about the last from whom such a defence was expected. He said, "Shut up, you fool. I mayn't have the courage to do such work myself, but I've got sense enough to respect the men who have." One piece of testimony from a man, well past middle-age, is worth repeating. He said, "We who joined the movement late soon found we had to have private meetings for prayer among ourselves before going out. If not we started arguing; the visit became a wrangle, and more harm

was done than good. But if we had prayed we kept gentle and persuasive. And most of us, who had been irregular at communion, monthly or even less, started going every Sunday." There is no doubt that such a movement in any parish, whether in connection with a Mission or not, would go far to bring in the Kingdom of God. But where are the laymen to work it?

(iii) *Visiting.* We now come to the question of house-to-house visiting which is, next to prayer, the most important thing of all. We may distinguish the preparation of the books, the preliminary visitation, and the intensive visitation just before the Mission.

(*a*) *Preparation of the Books.* I cannot help thinking that Missions would often be far more successful if the organizers recognized that visiting is a difficult and, to beginners, often a rather terrifying job. Everything, therefore, should be done to make it as easy as possible. As soon as the districts have been mapped out the Sub-Committee, or Secretary, should go through the books of the various organizations picking out names and information. Is book No. 1 the odd numbers in Boundary Street, 1 to 45? Well, then, what regular churchpeople live there? What houses contain people who, if they don't attend themselves, have children who do? Which houses, while supplying no children to the Church or Sunday School, have children in the Day Schools? Is there any house where the people are known to have a long-standing grievance against the church, because of some fancied slight or neglect? Is there a noted atheist in the street? Every bit of possible information should be supplied to the visitors. I do not recommend writing it in their books. All visitors should be encouraged to write up their books in their own way. And great care should be taken in allotting districts so that the least experienced visitors get the easiest ones, while the more capable visitors have the streets

where there are several families in one house, or where for any other reason difficulties are to be expected. And visitors should not merely be allowed, they should be encouraged, to call first on any good churchpeople in their district and to ask what those people know of their neighbours. It is a great help if one is told "It's no good your calling at No. 7, nor at No. 25; they are Roman Catholics. You'd better call at No. 11; they will be glad to see you, and will probably come to some of the services. But you'll not get them to come on Sundays, for they are great chapel folk, and go regularly to the Wesleyan Mission."

Thorough preparation of all the books will mean a lot of work for the Secretary. But it will be labour well spent.

(*b*) *Preliminary Visitation.* As soon as the books are in the hands of the visitors—which may, with advantage be anything up to a full year before the date of the Mission, and should in no case be less than six months—they should begin to get to know their districts. Many writers on Missions say that it should not be mentioned to outsiders too long before it takes place, or the people tire of it, and get bored with the idea. This is only a half-truth. You do not want to be always talking about the Mission, either to people in church or to those outside, but it is well to mention it from the beginning. The visitor, at the first visit, may say, "We are hoping to have a Mission at the Church in about a year, and as this will be my district then, I want to begin at once to get to know everybody." After that, till the intensive visitation begins a short time before the Mission itself, the visiting should be on the lines of ordinary parochial visitation, as described in Chapter II of *The Town Parson.* The object is to get to know the people well, and to establish friendly relations. I should like to recommend the leaving of a tract at each house each week. But I cannot do so, for two reasons. The cost of really

good tracts is almost prohibitive, if a large parish is to be covered. And there are very few good mission tracts. On the other hand many of the tracts that I have seen, which can be supplied cheaply in bulk, are not such either doctrinally, or from the point of view of good taste, as I could recommend. Of course, there may be good cheap tracts of which I know nothing. I don't want to condemn all tracts unseen. But I think there is an opening for good bright tracts at not more than 1s. or 1s. 6d. per hundred, and with enough variety to last over a whole year. For it is not to be denied that people will read tracts left at their doors.

(*c*) *Intensive Visiting.* By intensive visiting I mean the regular visitation of every house on the visitors' lists for six or eight weeks before the Mission, when Mission literature is left, promises to attend the Mission asked for, objectors interviewed and talked with, and every other kind of final effort made. First of all the visitors should be asked how long it takes them to visit every house in their districts. Can they guarantee doing it in a week? Or must ten days, or even a fortnight be allowed? If each district contains no more than twenty houses a week should be enough. Now there are certain documents to be distributed; they are the Vicar's letter, announcing the Mission; a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese, commending it to the prayers and support of the people; the Senior Missioner's letter, asking the prayers and sympathy of those he is going to work among; the letter of the Children's Mission to the parents, asking their help and interest; a letter from the Children's Missioner to the children themselves; possibly a letter from the Assistant Missioner to men and lads, asking their help and support for dinner-hour services, open-air work, etc., and finally a list of Mission services. Thus there will be six or eight letters to be delivered. In the case of the letters of the Vicar,

Senior Missioner and Children's Missioner to parents, and the list of services, one should be delivered to each house or family. In the case of the letter to children, and that to men and lads, it is good that workers should have a rather larger supply so that at each house they may say, "Now, let me see. How many children are there in this house? I must leave a letter for each"; or, "I daresay Mr. Brown could say a good word for the Mission at Messrs. Dobson & Bradbury's, where he works. I'll leave him a letter. And Tom and George could each help us, where they work, so I will leave one for each of them. Willie works too far away for anyone to come from his shop to the dinner-hour services. But he might be able to help at the open-air work at night. So he'd better have a letter too." While talking in this way the visitor may write the name on each letter. This sort of individual work is always effective. But obviously it argues a pretty intimate knowledge of the district on the part of the workers.

As soon as the visitors have decided what length of time is required to cover a district once, a time-table should be issued to them something as follows:

MISSION VISITORS' TIME-TABLE

During the week beginning:

August 29th.	The Vicar's Letter.
September 5th.	The Bishop's Letter.
September 12th.	The Senior Missioner's Letter.
September 19th.	The Children's Missioner's Letter to Parents.
September 26th.	The Assistant Missioner's Letter to Men and Lads.
October 3rd.	The Children's Missioner's Letter to Children.
October 10th.	The List of Mission Services.

N.B.—The final week before the Mission, October 11th to 16th, should be kept for last efforts with special cases.

There is one point, a fad perhaps of my own, which I would mention. I have had sad experience of the difficulty of getting people to read handbills handed to them. Often a woman has no sooner accepted such a bill than she begins absent-mindedly to fold it into the form of a spill. Again and again I have said, "You know, Mrs. Jones, that paper is not meant to be crumpled up. I want you to read it, and put it up somewhere so that all the others can read it too." She replies placidly, "Yes, sir! I know. Thank you very much, I'm sure." But she continues folding and refolding the paper as she talks. On the other hand anything taken out of an envelope is unfolded; and anything unfolded is read. There is something in human nature, it would seem, that makes that inevitable. So I insist on all letters, etc., being put into envelopes. These are printed on the outside as follows:

ST. PHILIP'S, SALFORD. GREAT PARISH MISSION
A Letter to You from
.....
about the Mission, October 16th to 31st

The blank in the middle is of course filled differently each week and will read "the Vicar," "the Bishop of Manchester," "the Senior Missioner," "Your Children's Missioner" (for letter to parents), "the Men's Missioner," "Your Own Missioner" (for letter to children), or "The Mission Committee" (for list of services). All this, of course, means a little extra expense and a little extra trouble. But it results in less waste, less of throwing things about broadcast, and it also yields, I am sure, the best results.

The list of services should aim at combining simplicity with completeness. I have found the best plan to be to print, in as large type as possible, the main headings, and then the details in smaller type something as follows:

ST. PHILIP'S, SALFORD

MISSION SERVICES, OCTOBER 16TH TO 31ST

Holy Communion
All Three Sundays at . . .
Every Week-day at . . .
Mondays also at . . .
Tuesdays and Thursdays also at . . .
Wednesdays and Fridays also at . . .

Women's Services
Both Weeks on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at . . .

Children's Services
Both Weeks on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at . . .

Dinner-Hour Services
Every Week-day except Saturday.
(Place and hour given out at the Mission Service the night before.)

Great Mission Service
All Three Sundays at 6.30 p.m.
Every Week-night at 8 p.m.

N.B.—The Bishop of Manchester will receive and bless the Missioners at the opening Service at 8 o'clock on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th.

Avoid such expressions as "from Monday to Thursday" for people won't know whether it includes Thursday or not. The word "inclusive" is not understood. Don't complicate the list of services which is for "them that are without" with needless details of such services as intercession services for workers. These can be given out at the services daily. If there are many works in the parish, so that each is visited only once or twice, it needlessly complicates the notice-paper to have a long list of works at which dinner-hour addresses will be given. And it is useless, since few people except those actually employed in a mill or factory, are likely to attend a dinner-hour service there. Far better tell any keen helpers who

work at the mill to make it widely known, and get permission, if possible, to post a notice the day before at the actual place of meeting. In a word, care should be taken, in drafting lists of services, handbills, posters, etc., to put on everything that is really necessary and nothing that is not.

(iv) The material apparatus of a Mission is not, of course, a matter of the same importance as the spiritual preparation. But it is not therefore unimportant. Unless these have been already provided, for preliminary efforts in open-air preaching, it will be necessary to get lanterns for the evening processions and sticks on which to carry them. Large "guard" lanterns, or stable lanterns, which burn oil, are the most useful as givers of light, but they are heavy, troublesome to fill and to light, expensive to buy or to hire, and quite possibly dangerous. Small collapsible tin lanterns burning candles, are light to carry, cheap to buy, simple to light, free from all danger, and in dark streets really more beautiful. A procession headed by a surpliced choir, and carrying twenty or thirty such lanterns is a striking sight on a dark night. Boys from the Day or Sunday Schools should be recruited to carry them, and two young men put in charge of the business for the whole period of the Mission.

A very useful addition, where it can be provided, is a portable transparency bearing the words :

GREAT PARISH MISSION

SUNDAYS, 6.30 P.M. WEEK-DAYS, 8 P.M.

Follow us back to Church

A light wooden frame-work, covered with book-cloth, and lighted from within by electric light fed from an accumulator, can be mounted on two poles and carried at the head of the procession by two young men. The legend should be on both the front and

back of the frame, so as to be read as the procession approaches and as it recedes from the spectator. Such a transparency was made, and worked, at our last mission by some of the men, at small cost.

If the procession is to sing hymns or metrical litanies as it marches, some musical instrument such as a cornet appears to me to be absolutely necessary. But no cornet player that I have ever met can march and play continuously. Yet long pauses between the verses, to allow the player to get his breath, are fatal. So there should be two players, who play alternate verses. But if the cornet players have to be hired—and if hired the proper rates of the musicians' union should be paid, since the church should be careful to keep free of sweating—the expense will be heavy. So if there are no voluntary cornet players to be had it will be better to march silently from station to station, singing only when standing still, before and after the brief addresses of invitation to "follow us back to church." For stationary singing nothing is better than a concertina. Both while marching and at the stations, "light skirmishers" drawn from the workers of the special streets which are being visited should distribute handbills to people who gather round, or who are standing at doors. These handbills should be boldly printed, easy to read, and in addition to the general invitation:

GREAT PARISH MISSION

OCTOBER 16TH TO 31ST

SUNDAYS, 6.30 P.M. WEEK-DAYS, 8 P.M.

Follow us back to Church

may contain a special text or exhortation. When the main body of the handbill has been set up the cost of 2,000 won't be greatly increased if sets of 250 are printed, each bearing one of the following eight phrases:

(1) A Mission is God's opportunity. He may have a special word for You. Don't miss it.
(2) In a Mission "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Won't You be there to meet Him?
(3) God is saying to You, "Behold now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Do not miss it.
(4) Thousands in the past have said, "I bless the day I attended our Mission." Won't You seek the same blessing?
(5) St. Philip's Church is Your Church. We need You and You need us. Come to-night.
(6) Jesus died for You. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Come and hear the Good News.
(7) Jesus said, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you Rest." Come to Him to-night.
(8) Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." It is the door of Your heart at which He is standing. Open to Him now.

I am convinced that the open-air processions, at any rate during the first week, and if not kept on too long, can be one of the most effective agencies in the Mission. But they must be well thought out, and thoroughly organized, or they are worse than useless. If at the last minute a score of small details have to be seen to, if the procession starts a quarter of an hour late, if it is small and unimpressive, and if the parochial clergy, anxious to be free to attend to other things, have nevertheless to go out themselves to do the speaking, it will be a hindrance, not a help. So have everything thoroughly organized beforehand.

Except at celebrations of the Holy Communion—personally I feel inclined to say "Except at Sunday celebrations"—there should be no collections at any services during the Mission. There will probably be a tussle with the wardens on the point. Those worthy and zealous men will urge that the usual sum for

church expenses must be raised every week, and that the expenses of the Mission will also be very heavy. But on this point the Senior Missioner must stand firm. A collection at a Mission Service cannot be tolerated. And bags or plates held at the door are at once less fruitful and more obnoxious. How, then, are the expenses of a Mission to be met? By means of alms boxes placed in suitable places, and bearing, in the boldest type possible, the legend *For the Expenses of the Mission*. If the boxes are of the right kind, and if the Missioners, when giving out notices, constantly remind the people that the Mission will cost money, and must not be allowed to be a burden on the ordinary revenues of the church, it is surprising how the people will give. But boxes must be of the right type. If there are only two small alms-boxes, fastened to the wall where not one person in ten, out of a large crowd streaming out of church, can reach them, and if the slits are of the usual minute kind, into which it is quite a work of art to force a penny, it is not strange if ninety-five per cent. of the congregation contribute nothing. At several Missions that I have known the Vicar has borrowed the largest sized drain-pipes, and stood them upright with the bottom end plugged. But draped or undraped, these are unsightly and noisy, and they are too low to be seen. One of my young men made me eight ideal boxes, at no cost beyond the price of the wood, hinges and paint. They were large boxes, 2 ft. by 1 ft., and 1 ft. deep, and stood on feet that raised them to the level of an ordinary table. The top consisted of two sloping slats leaving about an inch of open space between them. Anything thrown into them fell into the inside where a slab of felt deadened the sound. This type of standard collecting box can often be seen in the street on days when collections are made for the Lifeboat or Hospital Funds. They might be borrowed from the local secretary of these Funds, but

it is really better to make one's own. They need not be "thief proof" as they are cleared after every service. Two on each side of the main doors, and one on each side of each side door are needed. Along with them there should be a table with a convenient box or basket marked "Intercessions and Thanksgivings," a plentiful supply of half sheets of paper, and a few pencils, for the convenience of those who want to put in requests for prayer, or thanksgivings for mercies received.

Another detail is worth mentioning. The Mission hymn-books are a great expense. Enough must be provided to supply the largest number of people that the church can hold, since nothing offends those drawn in more than to be left without a book. The regular members of the congregation may be encouraged to buy their copies, which should be stamped, clearly but not too obtrusively, with a special stamp to show that they have been sold. All others, those that is to say that are provided for the use of the congregation, must be stamped "*Not to be taken away*," and also with the name of the church. But at the end of the Mission, even if the books are used from time to time in church, or at the Mission Church or Mission Room, there are sure to be many more than are required. A great saving may be effected by selling two or three hundred at a slightly reduced price to some church which is going to have a Mission. If this is to be done it is obviously important to see that the books are as little knocked about, torn, and dirtied as possible. This is best secured by having a number of flat boxes, without lids, made to contain 50, 100, or 150 copies each. If the boys who collect the books at the door as people leave, or from the seats after the service, carry these boxes with them, and stack the books neatly in them, the great bulk of the books will be almost as good as new at the end of the fortnight. On the other hand I have often seen

tumbled heaps of books at the west end of a church after a mission service, and realized that it is not using, but misusing our hymn-books, that wears them out.

The subject of literature for use during the Mission, such as Resolution Cards, papers informing the clergy of wants or of offers of service, Memorials of the Mission, and similar things are dealt with in the Appendix.

The more every detail of the Mission can be thought out and organized beforehand, the better. And some person, or persons, should be put in charge of each special piece of work. The younger men and women will love to assist.

CHAPTER V

THE AFTER-WORK OF A MISSION

It is almost a commonplace on the lips of Missioners that the real work of a Mission begins when the last sermon of the Mission has been preached. I wonder how many times I have heard Missioners say, in the closing address of a Mission, "Do not say 'The Mission ends to-night'; say rather, 'The Mission begins to-morrow'." Now if this means that the after-work of a Mission is of such vital importance that, should it be neglected or badly done, the Mission will prove to have been a failure, it is perfectly true. But we must be careful how we try to carry on the work. What we must aim at is not a continuance of the Mission but the right kind of development from it. For it is easy to make a very dangerous mistake here. Every Mission is rightly an appeal to the emotions, as well as to the will and the understanding. And so the mission period is, for many, a very happy time, a time when, as they will tell you, they "feel religious," "enjoy their religion," etc. Such periods of stirred feeling have their uses as well as their dangers. But it is useless to try to make them permanent, and disastrous to try to work them up periodically. What we ought to aim at is so to use these times of warmed affections as to form habits of right living, habits which, "by a patient continuance in well-doing,"[1] may build up lasting Christian character. But there are sure to be some who will want to prolong the

[1] Rom. ii. 7.

mission atmosphere. Often parishes which have had a successful Mission resolve to have a Mission Service in place of Evensong one Sunday a month, all through the Lent or Advent following the Mission. Or, if this is not attempted, the mission hymn-book is used, and mission hymns sung, one Sunday evening a month. I am convinced that anything of the sort is a mistake. When the Mission proper ends, let it end. Have a Saturday to Monday "Re-Visit" of the Senior Missioner after twelve months, or even a "Refresher Week," eighteen months after, if you like. But apart from that let the roused wills and stirred emotions of the Mission be turned in other directions. If not, the enthusiasm of the Mission will merely dwindle away, and attempts to whip it up again from time to time will do harm, not good.

What then should be the nature of the after-work? It should consist of dealing with those drawn in, and with those persons who, though they were members of the congregation before the Mission, have heard a call to a closer discipleship. We may distinguish three types of work, namely:

(i) Special cases, needing special treatment.

(ii) Ordinary cases, where individuals merely need shepherding into the appropriate organizations.

(iii) Developments and extensions of parochial organizations made necessary by the Mission.

(i) Special cases are of various kinds. The unbaptized must be prepared for baptism, and the unconfirmed for confirmation. And in both cases the preparation, so far from being shortened or hurried because "they got a lot of instruction during the Mission, and they are not little children, but serious adults," should be thorough and prolonged, making some real claims on the candidates' time and patience. Only so can one make sure that the desire for baptism or for confirmation is deep and sincere, and not the

result of a passing emotion. When anyone has made a first confession at a Mission the missioner will naturally consult him as to whether he means to continue the practice, and whether he would like the missioner to say anything about him and his trouble, and if so what, to the parish clergy. One of my spiritual masters, to whom I owe more than I can say, once said to me, nearly thirty years ago, "No one is more opposed than I to what is called 'habitual' confession, and no one is less inclined to advocate frequent confession. But there are some sins, and especially some long-continued habits of sin, the power of which is best broken by the rule, *Confession immediately after every fall.*" Experience during the last thirty years has proved that this is absolutely true. The missioners should therefore be asked for a list of those cases which desire the further help of the parochial clergy.[1] There may be cases of couples living in sin who desire to be married; cases of long continued bitterness and estrangement between husband and wife; cases of injury to someone else which the ill-doer now, for the first time perhaps, recognizes, regrets, and would make good; and many other special cases. The sinner has been brought, under the influence of the Mission, to repentance, confession (whether auricular or not does not matter in this connection) and desire for amendment. Nothing will have such a fatal effect as any appearance of slackness, of unwillingness to deal with the case, on the part of the parochial clergy. No soul must be permitted to say, "Oh! they don't care about my trouble. All they wanted was just to fill the church during the Mission. Now it's over we can go hang." So such cases should be dealt with as soon as pos-

[1] It hardly needs saying that no priest, missioner or otherwise, must mention the name of a penitent whose confession he has heard, still less give any hint of what the chief trouble has been, except at the penitent's express desire.

sible. No matter how tired the clergy and lay workers may be after a strenuous Mission, the weeks, aye the days, which follow it are the time for garnering fruit. Some few years before the War two well-known missioners, who often worked together, conducted a Mission in an industrial parish of some 6,000 people. The senior missioner told me of the really wonderful response they had met with. I did not want to damp his spirits so I did not tell him that the Vicar, who had no colleague, had got neighbours to be responsible for all services on the two Sundays following the Mission, and had himself started, a few hours after the missioners had left the parish, for the inside of three weeks at the seaside with his wife, on the plea that the long preparation for the Mission, followed by the strenuous ten days which it lasted, had left him quite exhausted. The Vicar was an excellent and sincere man, truly anxious to do his duty. I am sure he was not conscious of doing anything blameworthy. But the incident illustrates the lack of understanding, on the part of many clergy, of how to garner the fruits of a mission.

(ii) In addition to the comparatively small number of special cases needing special treatment there will be the general body of converts needing to be absorbed into the various organizations of the church. Every boy and girl below fourteen, who has attended the church for the first time during the Mission, must be visited and secured for Sunday School. This will of course be the task of the Sunday School teachers, but these may be encouraged to associate with them in this work any suitable person among the older converts. For nothing is better for those drawn in than to be set working. Lads and girls over fourteen must similarly be caught for Bible Classes. Nor must the social activities of the parish, the Lads' Club, the Brigade or Scout troop, the G.F.S., the Girl Guides, the Band of Hope, be forgotten.

Each organization must be prepared not only to receive but to welcome new members. I have known cases where those in authority have complained of being "swamped by a lot of outsiders." Now no wise parson would wish to force unsuitable members on any organization. On the other hand, there is always the danger of selfishness, cliquiness, and exclusiveness. The organizations exist, like everything else connected with the parish, to advance the Kingdom of Christ, and officers and members alike ought to be ready and eager to do their part. Any little difficulty may be met in two ways, namely, by warning each organization beforehand to be ready to receive new members, and by starting fresh organizations, as explained in the next paragraph, where they are really needed.

But it is not young people only whom we have to consider. Equally, if not more, important are the adults. Lapsed communicants must be invited to take their rightful places in the Communicants' Guild; mothers of families must be invited to join the Mothers' Union or Mothers' Meeting; adult men must be found some work to do. It is an excellent thing to introduce each adult male drawn in to the Wardens, and to suggest to the latter that they should take an early opportunity to invite such new members to collect when any sidesman is away. Indeed the essence of the after-work of a Mission is that everyone drawn in should find his or her place quickly in the permanent organization of the church, and, to this end, that each should feel welcome.

(iii) We spoke in the last paragraph of warning the different organizations, in advance, to prepare to receive new members. But the clergy, or the Mission Committee, when discussing this point beforehand may realize that the organizations of the parish are not adequate. At one general mission in which I took part, all the missioners to the number of nearly

fifty, assembled the last day for mutual advice and help. One missioner complained that he feared most of his converts would drift away as there were literally no organizations in the parish. The Vicar, it seemed, disapproved of them. He was accustomed to declare that the church was the true home of the people, and the Book of Common Prayer the only and sufficient Guild Manual. Now while frankly admitting that organizations can be overdone, few clergy surely would go as far as this. Indeed, it may well be that the parson has desired to establish some organization, but has been held back by the feeling that there would be little or no response. The Mission may supply the needed occasion. Is there a Communicants' Guild? If not, can one be started? If there is one has it been, in fact if not in theory, confined to women and girls? Can a branch for men and boys, meeting on a different night, be started with good prospects of success?[1] Is there a parochial missionary society? Is there a branch of the Bible Readers' Union or of any society for regular prayer and intercession? In a word, what gaps are there in the parish which, without overloading the church with machinery, might profitably be filled?

Sometimes the character of those drawn in may make some new organizations necessary. In the Mission in my own parish, to which reference has been made several times, the zeal of a body of young men, mostly ex-service men, drew in some 80 or 90 youths between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. They were of the poorest labouring class, and many of them had been out of work for months, and even for several years, during which time they had stood at the corner

[1] I have stated elsewhere (*The Town Parson*, pp. 192 ff.) my reasons for having separate guilds, or at least separate times of meeting, for males and females. Where four branches are unlikely to succeed I should recommend one for married women, to meet in the afternoon, and one for girls, and another for men and lads together, the two latter to meet in the evening.

of the street, loafing, swearing and gambling. They would have been, and would have felt themselves to be, quite out of place in the Young Men's Bible Class, or the Lads' Club. Nor could the Lads' Club have received anything like that number of new members, quite apart from the fact that respectable young clerks and mechanics would not mix well with corner boys. What was to be done? The mission workers solved the problem themselves. They founded an afternoon meeting known as St. Philip's Brotherhood, round which various social activities, a class for Swedish Drill, a Swimming Club, Cricket and Football teams, etc., gradually grew up. Now, two full years after the Mission, many of the members are regular worshippers in church on Sunday at eleven, and the Brotherhood is one of the most valuable organizations of the parish. This seems to me an ideal outcome of a Mission for three reasons. Firstly, it kept the converts together and united them to the church. Secondly, it provided an outlet for the zeal of the mission workers, so that the spirit of service aroused by the Mission was maintained, and put permanently at the disposal of the church, instead of being allowed to die away. And, thirdly, the work was of the right kind, namely, spiritual work, with social activities growing naturally out of it, and not social work used as a bribe to attract young men to church. Though it will take me, for a few minutes, away from my proper subject I may say that I have not, and never have had, the slightest belief in clubs, and other social organizations for young people, as a means of drawing them to the church. I have the firmest possible belief in the church providing such organizations for those who are already her members. One of my laymen once expressed this view rather epigrammatically, when he said, "A door out of the church into the Lads' Club is a first-rate thing. It helps the parson and his workers to keep in friendly touch with the lads and young men.

A door out of the Lads' Club into the church is no earthly use. No young man has ever yet been drawn to Christ viâ the billiard table. If a lad joins a church for what he can get, he will stand stock-still, and go no further when he has got it." This is entirely my view.[1] What I said about the Brotherhood supplying a way by which the spirit of service, evoked by the Mission, might be maintained and put permanently at the service of the church suggests a further development. We must not seek to maintain the Mission atmosphere, or to go on with Mission methods. But there is no reason why such portions of the missionary preparation as are capable of being so adapted should not become permanent parts of the organization of the parish. If a number of workers have learned to value the meeting for prayer held during the year of preparation, a regular weekly prayer meeting may be established which, beginning by praying for the after-fruits of the Mission, may go on to embrace an ever widening programme of intercession. If some keen evangelists have been trained in street preaching, open-air work, from the beginning of Lent to the end of the autumn, may likewise be made a regular thing. Better still, if any number of men and women have developed a real enthusiasm for evangelical work they may be formed into a society which, after due training, and under the direction of the Vicar, or one of the curates, as warden, may seek permission from the Bishop of the diocese to conduct mission efforts, and evangelistic campaigns, in such parishes as they may be invited into. I am convinced that the Church will, in the future, have to depend more and more on lay helpers, and evangelistic efforts are those most likely to draw out enthusiasm and zeal. I believe many young people of both sexes leave the Church of England and join

[1] Cf. *How to Deal with Lads* (pub. Ed. Arnold), pp. 44-49.

nonconformist bodies because we don't, and they do, offer abundant opening for such work.

Perhaps, however, the most important part of the after-work of a Mission is that which must be done by the parish clergy themselves, or those whom they call to their aid ; and it consists of systematic teaching. I have again and again expressed my conviction that there is no weakness of our Church responsible for more injury to true religion than the weakness due to ignorance, on the part of the great majority of Church people of the teachings of their Church. People of all ages, drawn from all classes of society have, during the last five and thirty years, assured me that they could no longer accept the teaching of the Church. And again and again I have found, on questioning them, that they knew absolutely nothing about that teaching, and that what they rejected was not Christianity but some queer farrago of nonsense picked up from the cheaper newspapers, from popular novels, and from the conversation of people as ignorant as themselves. Systematic doctrinal teaching is at once what our people need, and what they have a right to. And, notwithstanding the frequently repeated assertion that "People don't want dull doctrinal sermons," there are few things that will draw a congregation, and nothing which will so establish it and build it up, as careful and well prepared sermons on doctrine. The parson, then, after a Mission should think out a good course of dogmatic instruction which may well be planned to last—with intervals for special occasions—for as long as two years. I do not mean that he should announce such a course. To do so would probably frighten many people away. Let him rather consider how, and when, he may best give clear teaching on the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Mission of the Comforter, the whole sacramental system, sin, repentance, forgiveness and sanctification, the life of the

Christian (prayer, meditation, Bible study, etc.), and many other aspects of doctrinal and practical theology. Thus he may say to himself, "This Advent I'll have a course on the Incarnation; in Lent I'll treat various aspects of the Atonement; from Easter to Whitsun Day it will be a change to take practical subjects like prayer, etc. After the holidays I'll fill up gaps in what I've said by a course on the Sacramental System; and next Advent a course on the Intermediate State, prayers for the dead, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Some courses can be announced. Short courses do good and rouse interest. But much of the parson's plan must be like a man's skeleton, there to give strength and coherence, but not seen. Or some neighbouring clergyman, known to be a good teacher, or some member of a Community, may be asked to conduct a "Teaching Mission." I gave my reasons in the first chapter, for thinking that such a mission could not take the place of an evangelistic mission, and would lose much of its value if held first. Following after the Parish Mission, at as short an interval as the Church Council deems good, it may be productive of much lasting fruit.

One thing above all must be avoided. The church and parish must not be allowed to settle on the lees after the Mission, so that the excitement passes and no fruit is garnered.

CHAPTER VI

THE MISSIONER AND HIS MESSAGE

We must now consider the work and character of a Missioner. All we clergy are, as I have already pointed out, bidden to "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of our ministry."[1] Every clergyman, therefore, should examine himself, earnestly and prayerfully, as to whether he is called to take an active part in this type of work. I have nothing but gratitude for the work of those members of religious communities who take Missions. But the task of preaching a Mission is a very severe one. It takes a great deal out of the Missioner. Few men are physically, mentally, or spiritually fitted to go on taking missions, at the rate of perhaps six or eight a year, with retreats, "quiet days," and other exacting kinds of spiritual work, in the intervals between such missions, over a long period of years. And nothing is more fatal than anything like staleness, formalism, or mere routine. I believe, therefore, that it would be better, in most cases, if our Missions were conducted by parochial clergy who did not take more than one mission a year at the outside; one in two years, or two in three years, might be better still. But clearly if this were to be done a very much larger proportion of the parochial clergy would have to conduct missions than is the case to-day. And why not? Their own parochial work would benefit. We may frankly admit that there are some men who are not well suited to this type of work. But since we are ordained to preach the gospel it should surely be the exception

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 5.

for a keen and vigorous clergyman to be "no missioner" rather than the exception for him to undertake the work. What are called great pulpit gifts are not necessary. They may even be a hindrance. Personally I should feel inclined to say that any man who found himself really unable, after careful preparation, to preach without manuscript, ought to feel that he was not called to conduct missions. Indeed, much dependence on notes is a serious handicap. But if a man is a fairly fluent and interesting speaker he should surely ask himself seriously whether he is not called to this work. And firstly he should ask himself whether he has a message. What is his aim, in working with men and women, boys and girls? Is it no more than to get them to church? I am sure I do not undervalue the importance of public worship. But merely to get a man to church is not enough. What do we aim to do with, or for, him when he comes to church? It is a very healthy discipline for any young clergyman to face questions like these and to try and put the answers into words. What is my aim? What is my message? How should I formulate, for myself and for others, the supreme purpose of my ministry? Different men, belonging to different schools of thought, will formulate their supreme purpose in different words. That is inevitable. But the first step for the would-be Missioner is to know clearly and distinctly what his message is and what he aims at.

The second step is to decide how you mean to present your message, and by what steps you will seek to lead people to the desired goal. It is not necessary to go into technical details here. I shall deal with the question of the form of the mission service, and the order of the mission message in another chapter. But it may illustrate the point I am trying to make, and show what I mean when I talk of the need to decide how to present one's message, if I contrast the method of two well-known missioners whom I

have watched. The first argues that Christ did not say to His apostles, "Come, and I will make you saints. And then, when you are truly holy, I will see if there is anything you can do for Me"; He said, "Come . . . and I will make you to become fishers of men;"[1] and in the course of their work for Him they became saints. So he preaches the world's need for reformation, the joy of service, and the laziness and selfishness of those who stand "all the day idle." The second argues that none can put the world straight but God Himself; that He works, in this world, only in and through man; and that nothing hinders God but our weakness and sinfulness. Hence the first step in all reform, social or religious, is the conversion of the individual. So he preaches sin, conviction of sin, surrender to Christ, and the need for personal holiness. His key text is, "For their sakes therefore I sanctify myself."[2] A man, he always declares, must *be good*, or at least be striving to be good, before he can *do good*. It is not necessary for me to say which approach to the subject I myself think the better of these two. My point is that every man who desires to be a Missioner must both have a clearly defined message, and also seek how best, and most forcibly, to present that message.

Having arrived at a clear conception of his own message, and decided in broad outline how it is to be presented, the next step to be taken by any clergyman desiring to be a missioner is undoubtedly to go as assistant with some experienced man. Indeed, since missioners vary so much in their methods, it is no bad thing to go three or four times, each time with a different man, and if possible to a different type of parish. And since the object is to learn the work it is a good thing if, on the first occasion, the new hand is neither Children's Missioner, nor Women's Missioner, but really "Assistant"; namely one whose task

[1] Mark i. 17. [2] John xvii. 19.

is to do odd jobs, and be at the Senior Missioner's beck and call. In the later missions he can be Women's Missioner, taking the afternoon addresses to women, or Children's Missioner, being responsible for all work with children and young people. Though indeed the work with children is so important, and the technique of children's work has been so developed in recent years, that any man with a special gift for dealing with young people may well remain a Children's Missioner all his days.

After seeing several missions, conducted by men with widely different methods, a clergyman will be in a position to decide the most difficult point of all, namely, how he proposes to bring his people to decision. Some definite act of decision there must be. "Where there is no expression there is no impression" is a sound maxim in religion as well as in education. Men often say, "I may not be much of a churchgoer, but I'm no foe to religion. I'm not one to make a lot of professions, but I daresay I am as religious at heart as a lot who make more show of it." The truth is that they have moments of religious feeling and emotion, but they have never really made up their minds. They don't want to be committed to anything, least of all to whole-hearted discipleship to Christ. As a working lad once expressed it to me, their attitude is "I don't want to put my hand out any further than I can pull it back again." The popular press, especially that portion which caters for the middle and upper middle classes, often paints this type of mind with no little accuracy, and always represents it as something specially admirable, English, and gentlemanly, the ripe product of our public school system. Such men are hostile to clericalism, impatient of dogma, more interested in the ethical than in the spiritual aspects of religion, disinclined to commit themselves to any clearly defined creedal position or to accept any binding obligations of church

membership. But all this, which sounds so sane, and gentlemanly, and reasonable when described in the correspondence columns of *The Morning Post* or *The Spectator*, is really nothing but the attitude of Nicodemus. And Christ meets it with the abrupt, uncompromising assertion "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."[1] Unless a man will come out publicly, and in some way or other become a marked man, unless he will commit himself to the driving power of the Holy Spirit so that he be driven like a leaf before the wind, he is not yet truly a disciple at all. So every Mission must supply some opportunities for confessing Christ openly. I know one missioner who is content that any who wish to do so should ask for a *Resolution Card* as they leave church. But this involves little or no effort, little or no publicity. On the other hand some missioners recognize nothing but a public profession, before the whole congregation, that the convert has "found Christ" and has "accepted full salvation." In this, as in everything else, each missioner must think out his own methods, and do what he feels to be best. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."[2] Only there is one thing of which I am sure. It is better to make the task too hard than too easy. The commonest fault of the clergy is lack of faith in the power of our own message. The commonest way in which we display this fault is by asking too little of our people. My own plan is to stand at the chancel steps, when I feel that the point in the Mission has come when decision may be looked for, and invite all who want to do so to come out boldly before the congregation and ask for a Resolution Card. On that card each person writes some definite resolution. Such resolutions as "I will serve God in all things" or "I will be a better Christian" are of little or no value. Such resolutions as "I will

[1] John iii. 5. [2] Rom. xiv. 5.

try to devote a quarter of an hour morning and evening to prayer and Bible reading " or " I will be in my place in church every Sunday morning when not prevented by sickness or some other sufficient reason," are excellent. The resolutions may be shown to the Missioner, and his advice asked, at a private interview. Or they may be kept as a matter wholly between the soul and God. But in every case the person who takes a card must come out before the whole congregation and ask for one. I believe this supplies just that degree of public witness which is required. I remember one mission where the Vicar assured me, almost tearfully, that anything of the sort would wreck the Mission. His people, he declared, were very reserved and shy, and no one would step out to take a card, except perhaps a few silly and emotional girls whose action would hinder rather than encourage others. When the night came on which I had made up my mind to ask for decision I stood for a few moments on the chancel step while no one moved. Then a man of about sixty, a leading man in civic life and the head of a great business, came slowly up the aisle and took a card. He was absolutely the last man one would have expected to act so. He said to me afterwards, " I think caution, call it cowardice if you like, has spoilt my religion all my life. If I could have preached at a street corner, or stood a bit of persecution for religion, it would have made all the difference. But I'm no great speaker, even on matters I really know something about. And no one gets persecuted for religion these days. It's the other way round; you get praised and flattered. But that going out before the congregation was just what I wanted. No, that's wrong! I did not want it. I hated it. I was all sweating and trembling. But if I did not want it, I needed it." I may have altered a word here and there in this. I have not altered the sense of what he said. For it just expressed what I knew to be the truth.

Of course, the greatest care must be taken to choose the right moment at which to ask for decision. And the matter must not be sprung on the congregation. The Missioner should explain both the method he means to pursue, and its spiritual meaning and purpose, clearly to the people each night for two or three nights before he calls for decision. I always say, "When I feel that the right moment has come I shall give you an opportunity to witness publicly for Christ. And this is the method I shall pursue." One word of caution is called for. From the highest motives many clergy are anxious to make things easy for their people. So they ask the Missioner whether he would like them to set the example by being the first to come up for a card, or whether they shall arrange for the Lady Worker, or for one or two devout members of the congregation, to give the others a lead. Anything of this sort is fatal. It costs a clergyman little or nothing to come out and accept a card. And anything like arrangement beforehand, anything like stage management, of what should be a spontaneous response to the appeal of the Holy Ghost, is unthinkable. By all means let the clergy have their turn. But let it be on the last night on which cards are given, not on the first. And let everything be spontaneous and unforced.

Closely allied with the method of calling for decision is the method of dealing with individual cases. There are many people who must talk out their religious or moral difficulties with someone or the whole effect of the Mission will be lost. Such talking out of a person's secret trouble may be in the confessional or on the penitent form, to the missioner or to one of the mission workers. Indeed the method of confession—apart from the sacramental value of absolution, which I personally believe to be immense—is of little moment. But some sort of admission of guilt, some open discussion of the trouble, there must be. "For while I

held my tongue my bones consumed away through my daily complaining."[1] So many missioners have an "After-Meeting" at the end of the Mission service when personal dealings with individuals become possible. On the occasions when I have seen anything of the kind the method has been to have a hymn, during which any of the congregation can leave who wish. The Missioner then speaks specially of decision, of personal surrender, of free confession of sin, and of similar subjects, and the workers, moving about among the people who have stayed behind, ask them if they need any special help or advice, pray with and for them, urge them to seek the help of the chief missioner, and in every way endeavour to lead them to decision. Another hymn, or indeed several, may be sung during each of which those who wish to leave the church do so, and those who desire further help remain. I have watched this method at work on several occasions and I am convinced it is wrong. It has the following disadvantages: (i) If it is to work at all it needs a number of exceedingly tactful and well-trained assistants. Clumsy, officious, or tactless helpers can do much harm. (ii) It lengthens the service terribly, and often results in the chief mission service not so much coming to an end as dying out in something like bored exhaustion. For some people don't like to leave till the end, yet do not really feel any special call to seek personal help or direction. (iii) Many of those most needing help are of the type who would never seek it under the very open and public conditions of such an after meeting. And for those who are willing to make what amounts to an almost public confession the emotional stress is, I fear, often injurious rather than helpful.

There may be, of course, advantages in these After-Meetings which are known to those who have used them, but of which I am ignorant. But I think the

[1] Ps. xxxii. 3.

balance of advantage is certainly with the method of Resolution Cards, taken publicly, and subsequent interviews in church where resolutions can be discussed, difficulties dealt with, and confessions heard. At one Mission, at which I was junior Assistant Missioner, the Senior Missioner would not have any services at all the last four week-days, Wednesday to Saturday, except the early celebrations of Holy Communion. All day we sat in church signing cards holding interviews, and in some, but by no means all, cases hearing confessions. And at another mission that I knew of the two missioners had nearly 500 cards brought for signature, so that a mission which should have ended on Tuesday was extended to Friday. The coming out for the card supplied the necessary opportunity for decision and public witness. The quiet interviews in church gave the necessary opportunities for confession, advice, and the talking out of difficulties. But each missioner must decide for himself what method he prefers.

When a man has thought out his message, and determined on his aim and method, he must decide on the form his mission service is to take. When I went to South Africa in 1904, to take part in the *Mission of Help*, I and several of the members of the team of missioners who went out by the same ship, had no ideas on the subject. Luckily we had among our number, Fr. Fitzgerald, C. R., and the Rev. A. E. Daldy, now Archdeacon Daldy but then Canon Missioner of Winchester Diocese. They most kindly lectured to us daily on the voyage out, and though I have modified the form of my mission services in small detail since, it still owes much to their teaching.

It will be convenient to consider both the form and the matter of a *Mission Course* in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

THE MISSION COURSE

A MISSION service is, of course, wholly non-liturgical. The ideal is that the missioner should be completely free, from moment to moment, to do as the Spirit may direct. But in this, as in everything, freedom is the fruit of previous discipline. A missioner should always go in to the mission service not merely well prepared as to what he means to say, but with a very distinct plan of what he means to do, and how he means to do it. Often he may be moved to modify his plan on the spur of the moment, and to discard this detail or add that. But a plan he must have. Each man must find a plan to suit him. I have found the following very convenient:

Hymn, Notices, Introductory Prayers, Hymn, Bible Reading and Brief Exposition. Hymn. Mission Sermon. Brief Silence. Hymn. Intercessions. Hymn. Instruction.

A short note on each detail may be useful.

The opening hymn may profitably be the same every night, in which case it is called "The hymn of the Mission." I always now use "Spirit Divine, attend our prayers." But any hymn to the Holy Ghost will do.

The notices should be given out fully and distinctly every night, and should be given each night as nearly as may be in the same words. This has the double advantage of being easier for the people to remember and preventing the Missioner from rambling and

making the giving of notices a kind of sermon. I have before me, as I write, the half-sheets of paper which I took into the pulpit with me each night of my last mission. The note *re* notices runs, on the paper marked "First Sunday Evening," as follows :

(i) Services. (ii) Alms. (iii) Intercessions. (iv) Interviews. (v) Order of Service.

On the half-sheet marked "Second Sunday Evening," they run :

(i) Services. (ii) Alms. (iii) Intercessions and Thanksgivings. (iv) Resolution Cards. (v) Interviews. (vi) Papers to sign. (vii) Order of Service.

Under "*Services*," the general services of the whole Mission should be announced and any special services of the next day.

Under "*Alms*," the expenses of the Mission should be briefly referred to and the people asked to see that it does not leave a debt on the Wardens.

"*Intercessions*" refers to requests for prayer to be placed in the box at the back of the church. The success of a Mission may largely be measured by the number and character of the requests for prayer. I always read them out just as they are written, asking the people to reply, "*We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord.*" Such requests as the following are both common and moving :

For a father who drinks, that he may come to the Mission and repent.

For a girl dying of consumption, that she may have the knowledge of her Saviour.

For a brother in Australia, not heard from for a long time.

Here I am sure there is no harm in the clergy and church workers giving a lead by putting in intercessions for the first night. If the matter is explained every night they will soon pour in. And Thanksgivings for answers to prayer (to which the people

respond "*We praise and bless Thee, O Lord*") spring naturally out of the intercessions.

"*Resolution Cards*" are the cards for which, as already explained, members of the congregation are invited to come out, and ask, on one or more nights of the Mission. It is a good thing to mention them, explaining the nature and purpose, several nights before the first occasion when they are actually offered. There should be no appearance of springing the matter on the people.

"*Interviews.*" Under this heading the Missioner announces the times when he, and his brother missioners, will be in church. It is well to make it clear that, though the missioners will be ready to hear confessions, all who desire to talk over their resolutions, or to seek advice on any matters, will be welcome.

"*Papers to sign.*" It is usual to put out in the pews, during the last few days of the Mission, papers which members of the congregation who desire to be baptized or confirmed, to make a first confession, to join a Bible Class, to bring children for baptism or confirmation, or in any other way to put their quickened interest in religion into action, can sign and return to the clergy.

"*Order of Service.*" It is a good thing, I believe, to state plainly, at the beginning, the order of the service, when it will end, and at what points in it people who cannot stop the whole time may best leave. Mothers, domestic servants, and others with not much time to spare, often leave at the first opportunity lest they may not have another chance to do so. If they know that the service will be over at such and such an hour, and that there will be further opportunities to go if required, they will stop on.

The notices having been given out, brief introductory prayer follows. While I am sure that many of the clergy might with advantage make more use, in

non-liturgical services, of extemporary prayer, I believe that for large general services the collects of the Prayer Book are the best thing. I generally use three or more collects, introduced by a short "bidding" as follows:

"As we are seeking the help of God in a very special way during this Mission, let us pray for such an outpouring of the Holy Ghost on this church and parish as was granted to the Church in Jerusalem on the first Whitsun Day."

Collect for Whitsun Day

"As the first work of God the Holy Ghost in the soul, His first work and the preparation for all else, is to 'convince the world of sin,' let us pray for new and contrite hearts."

Collect for Ash Wednesday

"As we do not know what our needs are, or how to ask aright, let us pray for just that forgiveness and just that grace, which God sees we need."

5th Post-Communion Collect

General Confession
Collect for 21st after Trinity
Very brief silence
Our Father

The second hymn should strike the distinctive note of the service. Thus if the subject is the return of the sinner to God it may be "*To-day Thy mercy calls us*" (Mirfield 142), while if it is conviction of sin it might be "*All my sins uprising now*" (M. 2).

So, too, with the brief passage of Holy Scripture, read and expounded. This must not be allowed to expand into a sermon. It should be no more than a scriptural basis for the night's special teaching. Thus if we take the parable of the Prodigal Son, to illustrate the return of the soul to God, it will be enough to indicate the main points thus:

(i) Sin is nothing more or less than life apart from God.
(ii) God will not hold you with Him against your will.
(iii) "Wasted his substance": *Sin* has its fruits in *sins*.
(iv) "I will arise": Break with the old life *now*.
(v) "While he was yet a long way off": God is waiting to receive you.

The third hymn should drive home the lesson. "Lord, I hear of showers of blessing" (M. 78) would be suitable. Then follows what should be the great effort of the evening, the Mission Sermon. It need not be, it had better not be, long. It should be intense. It should seek to gather up, to illustrate by telling anecdotes and stories, and to drive home, the one distinctive message of the evening. Thus if the subject has been, as above, the return of the soul to God, I might preach on "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (St. John xvii. 3), and the sermon's one and only aim would be to emphasize the joy, peace, and power of life lived in conscious surrender to God as contrasted with the dullness, restlessness and futility of life apart from Him. "O for a closer walk with God" (M. 90) would drive home the lesson of the sermon.

At this point follow the intercessions, read out slowly and distinctly by the Missioner, either kneeling in the middle aisle well down towards the bottom of the church (*not* right up at the chancel step, where he has his back to everyone) or, better still, standing in the pulpit. A very slight inflection of the voice at the end of each will indicate to the people when to make the response. If the people don't respond properly the Missioner should urge them to do so. I always tell them that such a litany should be a "strong crying" and that I want to hear everyone present

saying out loud, "We *beseech* Thee to hear us, Good Lord."

During the fifth hymn, which might well be "Revive Thy work, O Lord" (M. 113), any who desire to do so may be invited to leave the church, and there follows a brief instruction. What form should this take? Well, two things seem clear to me. Firstly, many people, even among regular church-goers, are lamentably ignorant of how to practise their religion. And secondly, it will be an enormous advantage if those present, stirred up and anxious to do something at once, can be shown what to do. Can these two truths help us to choose a suitable topic? I think so. A very brief instruction in prayer is what we need. Three points are enough.

(*a*) "*When ye pray, say Our Father.*" Put yourself in His presence and don't begin till you feel Him with you. Then talk freely in your own words.

(*b*) *Listen for His voice in return.* He will have something special to say to each; to one "I will, be thou clean"; to another, "My son, give Me thy heart"; to a third, "Friend, come up higher."

(*c*) *Be fishers of men.* Don't pray only for self.

If the Missioner, kneeling in the middle aisle, himself offers prayer on this model, ending with the Prayer of St. Chrysostom, and the Grace, it will make a quiet and suitable ending to the service and send many of those present home anxious to pray more fruitfully than before in their own rooms. Every effort should be made to keep the service down to an hour and a half; and if on week nights it can be kept to an hour and a quarter or an hour and twenty minutes so much the better. Many messages are drowned in needless words. Make your points quietly, distinctly, very audibly, and let them sink in. The two most effective missioners I have known were also the quietest and least dramatic. Of one of them a friend said to me, after the first mission service, "He'll

want a bit more fire and liveliness if he's to hold our people." But then he made no attempt to hold them. He left it to the Holy Spirit to draw them. And the results were wonderful.

Now it need scarcely be said that the above description of a mission service is not offered to my readers as a thing to be used. Nothing could be more fatal for a young missioner than to try and fight with another man's sword, and wearing another man's armour. It is merely meant to illustrate the way in which a single idea, say that of the return of the soul to God, can be made to dominate a whole service. The same end might be gained by the use of a totally different form of service. Each Missioner must find, by trial and experience, the *shape*, so to speak, of mission that suits him best.

When a Missioner has decided the method, the "shape" of his mission Service, he must go on to decide the more difficult question of the method or shape of his mission Course. He has certain things to do, namely, to awaken the consciences of his hearers, to bring them to decision, to help them in any moral or spiritual difficulties they may have, and to give them instruction in the practical duties of the Christian life, such as Prayer, Bible Study, Meditation, Communion, Public Worship, the support of Missions at home and abroad, and the duties of Christian Citizenship. And he has a certain time in which to do it, according as his Mission is a "Ten Days," a "Three Sundays," or a "Four Sundays" one. How shall he plan his course so as to find time for all he wants to do? At what point of his Mission shall he ask for decision? When shall the Mission cease to be an Evangelistic Mission, with conversion as its object and become a Teaching Mission, with edification as its main aim? Though a missioner may be compelled, when it comes to the point, to modify his plan to meet local conditions, giving more or less

time to directly evangelistic preaching according to the response the people make, yet it is clearly important for the Missioner to approach his task with a clear plan in his mind. I attended one Mission, many years ago, where the senior missioner had quite obviously run through his whole plan before more than two-thirds of the allotted time of the Mission was exhausted. For the remainder of the time I, and I fear most of the others present, felt that he was merely marking time. The result was that everyone was bored, and the Mission died out rather than came to an end. On the other hand I have often found myself so pressed for time that I have had to leave much of the instruction that I wanted to give to be done by the parochial clergy after the departure of the missioners. But of the two miscalculations this seems to me by far the less serious. Missioners are called into a parish to "do the work of an evangelist." If they rouse the careless, convert the impenitent, and stir many to a new effort, it will not matter much if they have to leave the parochial clergy to build on this foundation, and to give the needful teaching in doctrine and practice. But to curtail the evangelistic part, or to attempt to give teaching to people not yet ready to make a whole-hearted surrender to God, is a great mistake. It is to daub a wall with untempered mortar.[1] How then can we best plot out the plan of a Mission?

As I have said in Chapter III it is impossible to make anything like a really successful plan for a "Ten Days Mission" for the simple reason that the people you most want are the people you won't see till the night before you leave the parish. Still if you are restricted to ten days the best plan probably is to preach Sin, Repentance, Decision, up to Thursday night. The after meetings, and the whole service on Friday and Saturday, can be used for instruction. The second

[1] Ezekiel xiii. 10.

Sunday can be entirely evangelistic, embracing the preaching of Conviction of Sin and acceptance of a Saviour, and *nothing else*. And it is wonderful what results God the Holy Ghost can achieve in a single night, and among people who are hearing the mission message for the first time. Monday night—if the Mission does not end till Tuesday morning—can be instructional; but I never, under such circumstances, try to give the instruction. My message rather takes the form: "You have found peace and joy. You have chosen Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. Your cry now, like that of the converted Saul, on the road to Damascus, must be, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'[1] And your first task will be to perfect yourselves in the use of your spiritual weapons, prayer, meditation, Bible reading, communion, public worship, Christian service. For these you must look to your parish priests. If you are zealous and keen now you will soon be 'rooted and built up in Christ Jesus, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.'[2] But if you are careless and slack in this now your first fervour will soon pass away, and you will be like those 'which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.'[3] So hasten to put yourselves under instruction to your parish clergy."

If a missioner is lucky enough to be preaching a "Four Sundays Mission" there should be no difficulty about the plan. All the first week may be given to evangelistic preaching. The same preaching, given merely with different texts, illustrations, stories, etc., can be repeated the second week, at least up to and including Thursday. And the presence of a number who have already made their decision will produce an atmosphere most helpful to those who only came

[1] Acts ix. 6. [2] Col. ii. 7. [3] Luke viii. 13.

in on the second Sunday. The third Sunday will be the climax of the Evangelistic Mission and will open the week of instruction which leads up to the great Thanksgiving Sunday with which the whole Mission closes. Thus baldly stated there seems a risk of things being too long drawn out, and of people becoming bored. I can assure my readers there is no such danger. Those won during the first week should both enjoy and be deepened by the second week. Those drawn in during the second week will be helped by those already won. And the thoroughness with which the evangelistic part of the work has been done will make the instruction attractive to all. I have known cases where the congregations all through the third week were larger than on any single day in the first week. And it is a splendid thing to have the final thanksgiving communions and thanksgiving evensong on a Sunday and not on a week-day.

But if ten days are so much too short a period that a missioner should not accept that period if it can possibly be avoided, four Sundays do certainly represent an almost unattainable ideal. What, then, can be made of a "Three Sundays Mission"? I will not attempt to draw out anything like a mission scheme. I will only make one or two suggestions. They are:

(*a*) The form, *Bible-reading—Mission Sermon—Instruction*, which I have suggested for the Mission Service will be gradually transformed as the days pass. Sometimes the Bible-reading and Mission Sermon may coalesce, and so leave more time for the Instruction. Towards the end of the Mission the whole service, apart from the opening prayers, and the litany of intercessions and thanksgivings, may be instruction. Three short instructions on different aspects of a single subject, with hymns between, are less strain on the congregation than a single address of thirty-five minutes. In a word, the proposed form not only

may be, but should be, modified to suit the subject for the evening.

(*b*) The general plan of the Mission Course should run: Sin, Conviction of Sin, Repentance, the Redeeming work of the Saviour, Decision and Acceptance of Christ as Saviour, Instruction in the duties of the Christian life. More than one night should be given to each stage in the course, as some will move more slowly than others. The Missioner must judge when the congregation, or at least some part of it, is ripe for decision, and should then offer Resolution Cards to all who come out. Cards should not be offered *for the first time* on the Saturday night, when few are present, nor on Friday, if the congregation is very much less than the normal week-night average, as it may be in some industrial parishes in the north. On the other hand a very crowded Sunday evening is not an ideal time for the *first* offer of cards. If possible I like to make it on the first Thursday. But this is only possible where things have gone well. It may be necessary to postpone it till the second Monday.

(*c*) The Missioner should regard both Saturday nights as quite apart from the rest of the Mission Course. They may be used, and very profitably used, as times of preparation for the Holy Communion next day. But some people cannot come to church on Saturday night, and it will do good, and not harm, to explain that while all who can come are sure to receive a blessing, those who can't come will not miss any essential part of the Mission message.

(*d*) Whatever the form of the service may be, and however it may be modified, the proposed plan for the evening should be announced under the heading "Plan of Service" when the notices are given out, as explained on p. 95.

I cannot close without saying a word about Confession. I am sure that Confession must not be taught in a Mission without the full and willing con-

sent of the Vicar of the parish. On the other hand any missioner is entitled to decline to take a mission when liberty to give such teaching is refused him. And personally I myself should so refuse. I do not suppose that many of my readers will take up precisely the same attitude on this subject that I do myself. Some will go further than I, some not so far. But I should like to make my own position clear. I do not believe that Confession to a priest is necessary for all. And I am convinced the Church of England leaves the decision with the individual. On the other hand, I am convinced that for many people it is of the greatest possible value. Indeed, I believe the occasional unforced use of it would be of immense help and value in many lives. As for preaching a Mission without speaking of Confession, I could not attempt such a thing. Yet to get people to go to Confession is really not, as some missioners seem to think, the be-all and end-all of a Mission. I know of a case some years ago where a Mission was preached in a parish where Confession had been taught and practised for years. But the Vicar complained to me afterwards that the Missioner had utterly wearied the people with his insistence on the subject, and his denunciations of those who did not use it. Personally I am convinced that to give plain teaching on the subject, and to leave people free to do as their consciences direct, is not only the course most in harmony with the spirit of the Prayer Book, but in the long run the best policy. As it was certainly not meant as praise I may quote what a famous missioner, to whom I once acted as Junior Assistant Missioner, said to me many years ago. He said: "Brother, I have never heard anyone present the case of confession more clearly and persuasively than you. And then when you have got all the fishes into your net, you open it again and say, 'Little fishes, swim away'." Well, if they wish to swim away, let them. But my experience is that

those who need confession most come most willingly if unforced.

How then should Confession be taught in a Mission? It may well form the main topic of a whole evening. When sin has been thoroughly preached, and repentance and Christ's atoning work are being urged on the attention of the congregation, the Bible-reading and Mission Sermon may both give place to a quite short sermon on some such text as "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean," and the rest of the evening be devoted to a very plain, very simple, yet very outspoken explanation of the doctrine and practice of Confession. Even if sacramental confession has long been part of the teaching of the parish clergy there is no excuse for neglecting simple explanation of what it is, what it is not, how it is done, and what are its results. A Mission is addressed to "them that are without" and there are sure to be some who need simple teaching. Some people recommend a dialogue between the Missioner and one of the parish staff. The Vicar or Senior Curate asks questions, states difficulties, and demands answers to common objections. He does it with the air of a candid critic, anxious to learn, willing to be taught, but not as yet convinced. The Missioner replies, briefly and clearly, showing:

(*a*) That it is not "Roman";
(*b*) That it is "in the Prayer Book";
(*c*) That though no man can forgive sins yet Christ "hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him";
(*d*) That the priest is Christ's *minister* (servant) for this special work, just as the Home Secretary is the Minister through whom the King exercises that prerogative of mercy which is vested in the Crown alone.

I have used this method on one or two occasions, and there is no doubt that, if well rehearsed, the dia-

logue form does give great clearness to the teaching, and also interests the people. But even when the congregation are clearly told (as, of course, they must be) that the whole thing is, so to speak, a put-up job, and has been arranged beforehand between the missioner and the clergyman, there is a certain flavour of unreality about the whole thing. So for many years now I have disused it. But some might like to try it.

One thing only I would say. In teaching confession the thing to be emphasized is not the relief of speaking freely of one's secret faults, nor the value of advice from a skilled doctor of the soul, nor the help to be gained from sympathy, but the sacramental value of absolution. I am quite willing to admit that *Penance* is not a "Sacrament of the Gospel" (i.e. one ordained by Christ Himself) nor "generally" (i.e. universally) necessary. But I am none the less sure that it is a sacrament. For what is a Christian Sacrament; and what does it effect? A Christian Sacrament is a means whereby we receive the grace, the very nature and life, of Christ. Baptism unites us with that life, grafting us into the True Vine. Holy Communion fills us with that Life in all its fullness. But the "application of the Precious Blood to the soul" in Penance meets a special need in a special manner. The effect of wilful sin is threefold. For

(i) it blinds the eyes; so that the sinner can no longer distinguish good from evil;

(ii) it corrupts the affections; so that, even if he sees and knows a thing to be evil, the sinner can no longer love the good or hate evil;

(iii) it weakens the will; so that seeing and approving things that are excellent, the sinner still chooses evil. "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."[1]

But Christ, by His victorious resistance to tempta-

[1] Rom. vii. 19.

tion, has won a double portion of vision, of love for holiness, and of strength of will. And the Absolution in *Penance* gives us our share in these fruits of victory so that the absolved penitent is made as if he had stood firm, when tempted, instead of having fallen. If I am asked why I believe this I can only reply that it is my experience alike in my own case and in that of hundreds of men and women, boys and girls, whom I have known. Confession

> Breaks the power of cancelled sin;
> It sets the sinner free.

And that, I am sure, is the point to be stressed, and it is clear teaching on those lines which will lead just those to use Confession who need it most.

In conclusion let me stress one point again. In a Mission there is so much to be done in a short time, and so much teaching, practical and doctrinal, to be given, that every effort must be made to cut out the unessential and to concentrate on what matters. Cut out unnecessary verbiage. Let each service have a single and definite aim; and see that everything—hymns, prayers, Bible-reading, sermon and instruction—all combine to that one end. Let the whole course have a definite unity and a definite goal. The motto for a missioner might well be "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."[1] But this means very careful, detailed and thoughtful preparation beforehand, with nothing merely left to the impulse of the moment. It is true, as I have said, that when the moment comes a missioner may be moved to scrap all his prepared matter and to take quite another line. That does not matter. The preparation will not have been wasted. The great thing is that, when you go on a Mission, you should know clearly what you mean to do and how, with the help of God the Holy Ghost, you mean to do it.

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 26.

CHAPTER VIII

THE IDEAL MISSIONER

I CANNOT close this book without saying a few words about the Missioner's own character and life. A Mission should be the work of God the Holy Ghost, and the most perfect missioner is the man who manages to sink his own personality most utterly, and through whom the Holy Ghost can work most freely. Hence no matter how much time and care the missioner may spend on preparing his Mission Course, the really vital thing is his preparation of himself by prayer and communion with God.

And the young missioner will do well to remember that a Mission is, and ought to be, a great strain, both physically and spiritually. It is fatal to go to a Mission already tired out, and worse still to go feeling spiritually at a low ebb. I have once or twice been compelled, owing to faulty mapping of my time and engagements, to work hard right up to the last minute before starting for the scene of a Mission. I am sure it has been a mistake for which I and my congregations have had to pay. I believe the ideal course would be for a Missioner to have a Retreat—a good one, Tuesday to Friday—as soon after consenting to take a mission as possible. In it he can think out, and pray over, the lines he means to follow. The detailed work of preparation, lasting perhaps a year, would follow. Then immediately before the Mission he should have a complete holiday. Thus if the Mission opens on Saturday night it would be a good thing

if you could leave your parish the previous Monday, and spend the week taking moderate exercise, sleeping a lot, reading light books, and generally allowing body, mind and even spirit, to lie fallow. Once, when as a young man I had to enter for a really important examination lasting a full week, I worked up to the last minute and got a third, where my coach expected me to get a first, or high second. The next time I had to go in for a similar examination I knocked off all work a fortnight before, got a friend to take me long country walks, and tried to be in bed by 10 p.m. at latest every night. The result was a place beyond my, or my tutor's, wildest dreams. A "Three Sundays Mission" is a greater physical, mental and spiritual strain than a week's examination. It may not always be possible to get the whole of the previous week off. Six days' holiday and then three Sundays at the Mission, will probably prove too much for any parish priest. But try not to go to your Mission physically and spiritually jaded.

There is a matter, closely connected with what I have just said, which needs attention. Many men approach a Mission with feelings of depression and nervousness. I do myself. I seldom journey to the scene of a Mission without feeling sorry that I accepted the invitation to conduct it, and without thinking that if I get through all right this time I will drop taking missions. To draw an illustration from a very different sphere, I might appeal to rowing men, most of whom know what it is, as they wait for the start, to say to themselves, "Well, once this race is over I'll never set foot in a racing boat again." The feeling passes with the sound of the starting gun and, win or lose, the oarsman steps out of his boat keen to row again. So, too, with the missioner. By the end of the first or second day the depression has vanished, and when the Mission has run its full course, the missioner feels keen to exercise his evangelistic

ministry again as soon as possible. But during the first day or two it is fatally easy for the missioner, by a very little irritability or lack of self-control, to do infinite harm. Many years ago one famous missioner ruined a Mission, and I fear did lasting injury to a parish, by closing down a "Ten Days Mission" on the alleged grounds that there had been no prayerful preparation for the work, and that the Holy Spirit was not with them. I knew the parish rather exceptionally well, considering that it was one with which I had never had any official connection, and I believe the assertion had no foundation of any kind or sort whatever except in the Missioner's own state of nervous depression. And several examples—less serious but still quite serious enough to do harm—of this lack of self-restraint on the part of nervous and highly-strung missioners, could be quoted. I should like to contrast with such examples the behaviour of the missioner who conducted the last mission held in my own parish. While it is true that during the last week the Mission achieved some really wonderful results, results beyond anything I had dared to expect, and which have proved as lasting as they were unexpected, it is also true that nothing could have been less promising than the first week of the Mission. It seemed as if the effort, so eagerly planned, so earnestly desired, and so prayed for and worked for, was going to be an absolute failure. Yet the Senior Missioner never showed the faintest sign of disappointment or dissatisfaction. I was almost in despair. He never showed, by word or look, the least sign that things were not going as he desired. Always calm, cheerful, gentle and unruffled, he carried the clergy and workers of the parish along, strengthening us where a lesser man might have weakened us. Missioners would do well to remember that if the work of conducting a Mission is a trying one the work of standing by and watching a Mission being conducted

in one's own parish is more trying still. A missioner may feel disappointed; he must never show it. His duty is to do his best. Results are with God. He may be sure that if he is unhappy at the apparent failure of the Mission the parish priest is more unhappy still. The missioner who can be, as my own missioner was, calm, cheerful, gentle and unruffled is the one who will not merely earn the love and gratitude of the clergy and workers of the parish—themselves perhaps sadly disappointed at the apparent fruitlessness of all their labours and prayers—but will be most likely to see the Mission that began ill end in visible success.

I believe that what I have just written would be endorsed by most experienced missioners. Yet the matter is so important, and men fail so easily under the strain of a Mission, that it may be well to drive home the point by a couple of examples. Many years ago I was taking a small part in a big "General Mission" which was being held in all the parishes of a great city. On the morning of the first Monday I had to go down town and met a young man whom I had the misfortune to know. He rushed up to me and asked had I heard about the Mission at St. Ichabod's. "A complete failure. Only a mere handful, less than twenty, at the Men's Service in the afternoon. Only two men in the Mission Procession at night. And such a poor attendance at the great Mission Service at night. Dear Fr. Blank was quite broken-hearted. Could I suggest anything?" I am afraid I replied with some plainness. I said "I can indeed suggest something. I would suggest that dear Fr. Blank should keep his mouth shut and his poor broken heart to himself. Since when has it been the duty of a Missioner to run round the town with his tongue out telling people how a brother priest neglects his parish?" In this case the chief blame was, we may hope, with an exceedingly silly young layman, and

not with the Missioner. But I know of another case where the Missioner made the parish priest stand up in his stall and confess, before the people, that it was his own prayerless life, and neglect of pastoral visitation, which had made the Mission a failure. The clergyman was a true saint, and a devoted parish priest, and the parish was one of quite exceptional difficulty. But naturally when the people had been assured that the Mission was a failure they lost interest in it, and a total and complete failure it became.

I believe that some of these follies and mistakes have been due, in the past, to the talk, so popular five and twenty years ago, about the absolute authority of the Senior Missioner. Now it is of course true that when the Bishop has commissioned the Missioners, they, or rather the senior of them, should be in entire control. The parish priest hands over his parish, for the period of the Mission, to the Senior Missioner. And the assistant missioners also owe a complete, unquestioning, and entirely loyal, submission to their leader. Indeed when I have acted as Assistant Missioner I have always enjoyed the feeling of being "under obedience." But there is no need for the Senior Missioner to be always parading his authority, still less for him to exercise it in silly and childish ways. In this, as in all things, real leadership will be most willingly conceded to him who seems least anxious to claim it, and most forgetful of himself and his own dignity. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."[1]

Indeed, all that has been said comes to little more than this, that the more the Missioner is himself in a state of grace, humble, prayerful, and responsive to the Holy Spirit, the more perfectly his work will be done. For indeed it is not *his* work; it is the work which God does through him.

[1] Matt. xx. 26 and 27.

This leads to my final point. Where all, or most, of the parish workers are working people, busy all day, and where the parish priest is the whole of the parish staff, special intercession services, such as those referred to on p. 69, may be impossible. But where any number, even four or five, clergy and workers can be gathered together at some appropriate hour of the morning, either in the middle of the morning or during the dinner-hour, for half an hour of prayer and intercession, it is a great help and spiritual refreshment for all. These services should normally be conducted by the Senior Missioner, and afford him a wonderful opportunity to create, by God's help, just that atmosphere which will make the Mission, in the fullest and truest sense of the word, a success.

APPENDIX

MISSION LITERATURE

A BRIEF list of literature needed, or useful even if not necessary during a Mission, is here appended.

(i) FOR ADVERTISING PURPOSES.

Posters, for the church notice boards, and public hoardings.

The letters, with appropriate envelopes (see pp. 66-68) from the Bishop, Vicar, Missioner, Assistant Missioner.

List of Services in form of handbill or leaflet to be sent out in an envelope one week, and for general distribution.

Handbills for distribution during open-air efforts (see p. 71).

(ii) FOR USE IN CHURCH AND FOR DISTRIBUTION.

Prayer cards, and scheme of weekly intercession (see pp. 51, 52).

Resolution cards.

Papers of requests addressed to the clergy.

Memorials of the Mission.

The resolution cards may be quite simple, as shown below, and printed on one side only.

ST. PHILIP'S, SALFORD.

PAROCHIAL MISSION.

I resolve by the grace of God

.....

.....

Missioner.

Or they may be more elaborate, as below, and printed on both sides in red and black :

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH,
SALFORD.

PARISH MISSION, Oct. 16-31, 1926.

In my Baptism God has made me

A MEMBER OF CHRIST.

" Now ye are the Body of Christ, and Members in particular."—1 *Cor. xii.* 27.

THE CHILD OF GOD.

" Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father."—*Romans* viii. 15.

AN INHERITOR OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

" If children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."—*Romans* viii. 17.

I HAVE PROMISED

To Renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

That is, to avoid what is wrong.

To Believe all the articles of the Christian Faith.

That is, to believe what is true.

To Keep God's Holy Will and Commandments and to walk in the same all the days of my life.

That is, to do what is right.

In the Presence of God, and before the Congregation, I renew the Solemn Promise and Vow made at my Baptism.

MY MISSION RESOLUTION

I.....

promise by God's help to try.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

and I pray for the grace of Almighty God to help me to keep my promise.

Signed .....

Missioner .....

The simpler form will be used when those who come out for them only receive a card. The more elaborate form is used when those who come out publicly renew their Baptismal Vows.

Papers of requests addressed to the clergy should be scattered pretty widely through the pews during the last week of the Mission. The following is a useful form:

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH, SALFORD.

WHAT WILL YOU DO AS THE RESULT OF THE MISSION?

Place a cross (thus **X**) *against anything you want to do, and sign the paper with your full name (putting also Mr., Mrs., or Miss) and your address.*

I have never been baptized and I wish to be prepared for Holy Baptism ... ...

I have children who have never been baptized, and I wish to bring them to Holy Baptism ... ...

I have children whom I wish to send to Sunday School ... ...

I have never been confirmed, and I wish to be prepared for Confirmation ... .

I have not come to Holy Communion for a long time and wish to be prepared to come ... ...

I want to join the Communicants' Guild .....

I want to join a Bible Class ... ...

I want to teach in Sunday School ... .

I want to take a Magazine District ... .

I want to take in the Parish Magazine ... .

I want to subscribe to the Free-Will Offering Scheme ... ...

I want my name put on the Electoral Roll .....

I want to make my Confession ... ...

Name .....

Address .....

At many churches those who have attended the Mission are given a memorial of the Mission which takes the form of an ornamental card, or sacred picture, with the name of the Church, the date of the Mission, and possibly the text of the sermon preached at the Thanksgiving Service, printed on it. The gift of five or six hundred of such pictures is a great expense, and I have always felt that the resolution card is a sufficient memorial. But if any missioner desires to have a memorial, plenty of suggestions can be obtained from Messrs. Mowbray & Co., Margaret Street, London, W.; or from The Faith Press.

(iii) TRACTS.

As I have said, in Chapter IV, the subject of tracts is a difficult one. The really good and useful ones are often too expensive for broadcast distribution, and those which can be got at a quite small price per 1,000 are not such as one would care to use. But any clergyman meaning to have a Mission might get specimens from the S.P.C.K. and other religious publishers. But even where general distribution of tracts cannot be attempted there may be a limited use of them. Thus if open-air services are held in the dinner-hour the subject of gambling will almost certainly need treatment. At such meetings a good tract on gambling may be given to any willing to accept it. Perhaps the best for this purpose, just because the writer discusses the matter from the point of view of common sense and not of religion is, "Why you can't win at backing horses," by Eagle Eye; published by Barnes Printers, Ltd., 168 Ingram Street, Glasgow, who will quote special prices for quantities. The National Anti-Gambling League, Parliament Mansions, Orchard Street, S.W. 1, also publish useful pamphlets and leaflets quite cheaply.

(iv) MISSION COURSES. For the use of the children's Missioner I can commend "Through the eyes of a Child," by H. E. Sheen, published by the Faith Press.

Printed at the RURLEIGH PRESS, *Lexin's Mead,* BRISTOL.

85713 269.6S
Green, P. G82S
Parochial missions to-day

269.6S
G82S

85713